

# SAINT PAULS.

APRIL, 1872.

## SEPTIMIUS.

*A ROMANCE OF IMMORTALITY.*

BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

*(Continued from p. 241.)*

AUNT KEZIAH had now put herself into a most comfortable and jolly state by sipping again, and after pressing Septimius to mind his draught (who declined, on the plea that one dram at a time was enough for a new beginner, its virtues being so strong, as well as admirable), the old woman told him a legend strangely wild and uncouth, and mixed up of savage and civilised life, and of the superstitions of both, but which yet had a certain analogy, that impressed Septimius much, to the story that the doctor had told him.

She said that, many ages ago, there had been a wild sachem in the forest, a king among the Indians, and from whom, the old lady said, with a look of pride, she and Septimius were lineally descended, and were probably the very last who inherited one drop of that royal, wise, and warlike blood. The sachem had lived very long, longer than anybody knew, for the Indians kept no record, and could only talk of a great number of moons; and they said he was as old, or older, than the oldest trees; as old as the hills almost, and could remember back to the days of godlike men, who had arts then forgotten. He was a wise and good man, and could foretell as far into the future as he could remember into the past; and he continued to live on, till his people were afraid that he would live for ever, and so disturb the whole order of nature; and they thought it time that so good a man, and so great a warrior and wizard should be gone to the happy hunting-grounds, and that so wise a counsellor should go and tell his experience of life to the Great Father, and give him an account of matters here, and perhaps lead him to make some changes in the conduct of the lower world. And so, all these things duly considered, they very reverently assassinated the great never-

dying sachem ; for though safe against disease, and undecayable by age, he was capable of being killed by violence, though the hardness of his skull broke to fragments the stone tomahawk with which they at first tried to kill him.

So a deputation of the best and bravest of the tribe went to the great sachem, and told him their thought, and reverently desired his consent to be put out of the world ; and the undying one agreed with them that it was better for his own comfort that he should die, and that he had long been weary of the world, having learned all that it could teach him, and having, chiefly, learned to despair of ever making the red race much better than they now were. So he cheerfully consented, and told them to kill him if they could ; and first they tried the stone hatchet, which was broken against his skull ; and then they shot arrows at him, which could not pierce the toughness of his skin ; and finally they plastered up his nose and mouth with clay (which kept uttering wisdom to the last) and set him to bake in the sun ; so at last his life burnt out of his breast, tearing his body to pieces, and he died.

[Make this legend grotesque, and express the weariness of the tribe at the intolerable control the undying one had of them ; his always bringing up precepts from his own experience, never consenting to anything new, so impeding progress ; his habits hardening into him, his ascribing to himself all wisdom, and depriving everybody of his right to successive command ; his endless talk, and dwelling on the past, so that the world could not bear him. Describe his ascetic and severe habits, his rigid calmness, &c.]

But before the great sagamore died he imparted to a chosen one of his tribe, the next wisest to himself, the secret of a potent and delicious drink, the constant imbibing of which, together with his abstinence from luxury and passion, had kept him alive so long, and would doubtless have compelled him to live for ever. This drink was compounded of many ingredients, all of which were remembered and handed down in tradition, save one, which, either because it was nowhere to be found, or for some other reason, was forgotten ; so that the drink ceased to give immortal life as before. They say it was a beautiful purple flower. [Perhaps the devil taught him the drink, or else the Great Spirit—doubtful which.] But it still was a most excellent drink, and conducive to health and the cure of all diseases ; and the Indians had it at the time of the settlement by the English ; and at one of those wizard meetings in the forest, where the Black Man used to meet his red children and his white ones, and be jolly with them, a great Indian wizard taught the secret to Septimius's great-grandfather, who was a wizard, and died for it ; and he, in return, taught the Indians to mix it with rum, thinking that this might be the very ingredient that was missing, and that by adding it he might give endless life to himself and all his Indian friends, among whom he had taken a wife.

"But your great-grandfather, you know, had not a fair chance to test its virtues, having been hanged for a wizard; and as for the Indians, they probably mixed too much fire-water with their liquid, so that it burnt them up, and they all died; and my mother, and her mother—who taught the drink to me—and her mother afore her, thought it a sin to try to live longer than the Lord pleased, so they let themselves die. And though the drink is good, Septimius, and toothsome, as you see, yet I sometimes feel as if I was getting old, like other people, and may die in the course of the next half century; so perhaps the rum was not just the thing that was wanting to make up the recipe. But it is very good! Take a drop more of it, dear."

"Not at present, I thank you, Aunt Keziah," said Septimius gravely; "but will you tell me what the ingredients are, and how you make it?"

"Yes, I will, my boy, and you shall write them down," said the old woman; "for it's a good drink, and none the worse, it may be, for not making you live for ever. I sometimes think I had as lief go to heaven as keep on living here."

Accordingly, making Septimius take pen and ink, she proceeded to tell him a list of plants and herbs, and forest productions, and he was surprised to find that it agreed most wonderfully with the recipe contained in the old manuscript, as he had puzzled it out, and as it had been explained by the doctor. There were a few variations, it is true; but even here there was a close analogy, plants indigenous to America being substituted for cognate productions, the growth of Europe. Then there was another difference in the mode of preparation, Aunt Keziah's nostrum being a concoction, whereas the old manuscript gave a process of distillation. This similarity had a strong effect on Septimius' imagination. Here was, in one case, a drink suggested, as might be supposed, to a primitive people by something similar to that instinct by which the brute creation recognises the medicaments suited to its needs, so that they mixed up fragrant herbs for reasons wiser than they knew, and made them into a salutary potion; and here, again, was a drink contrived by the utmost skill of a great civilised philosopher, searching the whole field of science for his purpose; and these two drinks proved, in all essential particulars, to be identically the same.

"Oh, Aunt Keziah," said he, with a longing earnestness, "are you sure that you cannot remember that one ingredient?"

"No, Septimius, I cannot possibly do it," said she. "I have tried many things, skunk-cabbage, wormwood, and a thousand things; for it is truly a pity that the chief benefit of the thing should be lost for so little. But the only effect was, to spoil the good taste of the stuff, and, two or three times, to poison myself, so that I broke out all over blotches, and once lost the use of my left arm, and got a dizziness in the head, and a rheumatic twist in my knee, a hardness of hearing,

and a dimness of sight, and the trembles ; all of which I certainly believe to have been caused by my putting something else into this blessed drink besides the good New England rum. Stick to that, Seppy, my dear."

So saying, Aunt Keziah took yet another sip of the beloved liquid, after vainly pressing Septimius to do the like ; and then lighting her old clay pipe, she sat down in the chimney-corner, meditating, dreaming, muttering pious prayers and ejaculations, and sometimes looking up the wide flue of the chimney, with thoughts, perhaps, how delightful it must have been to fly up there, in old times, on excursions by midnight into the forest, where was the Black Man, and the Puritan deacons and ladies, and those wild Indian ancestors of hers ; and where the wildness of the forest was so grim and delightful, and so unlike the commonplaceness in which she spent her life. For thus did the savage strain of the woman, mixed up as it was with the other weird and religious parts of her composition, sometimes snatch her back into barbarian life and its instincts ; and in Septimius, though further diluted and modified likewise by higher cultivation, there was the same tendency.

Septimius escaped from the old woman, and was glad to breathe the free air again ; so much had he been wrought upon by her wild legends and wild character, the more powerful by its analogy with his own ; and perhaps, too, his brain had been a little bewildered by the draught of her diabolical concoction which she had compelled him to take. At any rate, he was glad to escape to his hill-top, the free air of which had doubtless contributed to keep him in health through so long a course of morbid thought and estranged study as he had addicted himself to.

Here, as it happened, he found both Rose Garfield and Sibyl Dacy, whom the pleasant summer evening had brought out. They had formed a friendship, or at least society ; and there could not well be a pair more unlike—the one so natural, so healthy, so fit to live in the world ; the other such a morbid, pale thing. So there they were, walking arm in arm, with one arm round each other's waist, as girls love to do. They greeted the young man in their several ways, and began to walk to and fro together, looking at the sunset as it came on, and talking of things on earth and in the clouds.

"When has Robert Hagburn been heard from?" asked Septimius, who, involved in his own pursuits, was altogether behindhand in the matters of the war—shame to him for it !

"There came news, two days past," said Rose, blushing. "He is on his way home with the remnant of General Arnold's command, and will be here soon."

"He is a brave fellow, Robert," said Septimius carelessly, "and I know not, since life is so short, that anything better can be done with it than to risk it as he does."



"I truly think not," said Rose Garfield composedly.

"What a blessing it is to mortals," said Sibyl Dacy, "what a kindness of Providence, that life is made so uncertain; that death is thrown in among the possibilities of our being; that these awful mysteries are thrown around us, into which we may vanish! For, without it, how would it be possible to be heroic, how should we plod along in commonplaces for ever, never dreaming high things, never risking anything? For my part, I think man is more favoured than the angels, and made capable of higher heroism, greater virtue, and of a more excellent spirit than they, because we have such a mystery of grief and terror around us; whereas they, being in a certainty of God's light, seeing his goodness and his purposes more perfectly than we, cannot be so brave as often poor weak man, and weaker woman, has the opportunity to be, and sometimes makes use of it. God gave the whole world to man, and if he is left alone with it, it will make a clod of him at last; but, to remedy that, God gave man a grave, and it redeems all, while it seems to destroy all, and makes an immortal spirit of him in the end."

"Dear Sibyl, you are inspired," said Rose, gazing in her face.

"I think you ascribe a great deal too much potency to the grave," said Septimius, pausing involuntarily alone by the little hillock, whose contents he knew so well. "The grave seems to me a vile pitfall, put right in our pathway, and catching most of us—all of us—causing us to tumble in at the most inconvenient opportunities, so that all human life is a jest and a farce, just for the sake of this inopportune death; for I observe it never waits for us to accomplish anything: we may have the salvation of a country in hand, but we are none the less likely to die for that. So that, being a believer, on the whole, in the wisdom and graciousness of Providence, I am convinced that dying is a mistake, and that by-and-by we shall overcome it. I say there is no use in the grave."

"I still adhere to what I said," answered Sibyl Dacy; "and besides, there is another use of a grave which I have often observed in old English graveyards, where the moss grows green, and embosses the letters of the gravestones; and also graves are very good for flower-beds."

Nobody ever could tell when the strange girl was going to say what was laughable—when what was melancholy; and neither of Sibyl's auditors knew quite what to make of this speech. Neither could Septimius fail to be a little startled by seeing her, as she spoke of the grave as a flower-bed, stoop down to the little hillock to examine the flowers, which, indeed, seemed to prove her words by growing there in strange abundance, and of many sorts; so that, if they could all have bloomed at once, the spot would have looked like a bouquet by itself, or as if the earth were richest in beauty there, or as if seeds had been lavished by some florist. Septimius could

not account for it, for though the hill-side did produce certain flowers—the aster, the golden-rod, the violet, and other such simple and common things—yet this seemed as if a carpet of bright colours had been thrown down there, and covered the spot.

“This is very strange,” said he.

“Yes,” said Sibyl Dacy, “there is some strange richness in this little spot of soil.”

“Where could the seeds have come from?—that is the greatest wonder,” said Rose. “You might almost teach me botany, methinks, on this one spot.”

“Do you know this plant?” asked Sibyl of Septimius, pointing to one not yet in flower, but of singular leaf, that was thrusting itself up out of the ground, on the very centre of the grave, over where the breast of the sleeper below might seem to be. “I think there is no other here like it.”

Septimius stooped down to examine it, and was convinced that it was unlike anything he had seen of the flower kind; a leaf of a dark green, with purple veins traversing it, it had a sort of questionable aspect, as some plants have, so that you would think it very likely to be poison, and would not like to touch or smell very intimately, without first inquiring who would be its guarantee that it should do no mischief. That it had some richness or other, either baneful or beneficial, you could not doubt.

“I think it poisonous,” said Rose Garfield, shuddering, for she was a person so natural she hated poisonous things, or anything speckled especially, and did not, indeed, love strangeness. “Yet I should not wonder if it bore a beautiful flower by-and-by. Nevertheless, if I were to do just as I feel inclined, I should root it up and fling it away.”

“Shall she do so?” said Sibyl to Septimius.

“Not for the world,” said he hastily. “Above all things, I desire to see what will come of this plant.”

“Be it as you please,” said Sibyl. “Meanwhile, if you like to sit down here and listen to me, I will tell you a story that happens to come into my mind just now—I cannot tell why. It is a legend of an old hall that I know well, and have known from my childhood, in one of the northern counties of England, where I was born. Would you like to hear it, Rose?”

“Yes, of all things,” said she. “I like all stories of hall and cottage in the old country, though now we must not call it our country any more.”

Sibyl looked at Septimius, as if to inquire whether he, too, chose to listen to her story, and he made answer:—

“Yes, I shall like to hear the legend, if it is a genuine one that has been adopted into the popular belief, and come down in chimney-corners with the smoke and soot that gathers there; and incrust-

over with humanity, by passing from one homely mind to another. Then, such stories get to be true, in a certain sense, and indeed in that sense may be called true throughout, for the very nucleus, the fiction in them, seems to have come out of the heart of man in a way that cannot be imitated of malice aforethought. Nobody can make a tradition ; it takes a century to make it."

"I know not whether this legend has the character you mean," said Sibyl, "but it has lived much more than a century; and here it is."

"On the threshold of one of the doors of — Hall there is a bloody footstep impressed into the doorstep, and ruddy as if the bloody foot had just trodden there; and it is averred that, on a certain night of the year, and at a certain hour of the night, if you go and look at that doorstep you will see the mark wet with fresh blood. Some have pretended to say that this appearance of blood was but dew; but can dew redden a cambric handkerchief? Will it crimson the finger-tips when you touch it? And that is what the bloody footstep will surely do when the appointed night and hour come round, this very year, just as it would three hundred years ago.

"Well; but how did it come there? I know not precisely in what age it was, but long ago—when light was beginning to shine into what was called the dark ages, there was a lord of — Hall who applied himself deeply to knowledge and science, under the guidance of the wisest man of that age; a man so wise that he was thought to be a wizard; and, indeed, he may have been one, if to be a wizard consists in having command over secret powers of Nature, that other men do not even suspect the existence of, and the control of which enables one to do feats that seem as wonderful as raising the dead. It is needless to tell you all the strange stories that have survived to this day about the old Hall; and how it is believed that the master of it, owing to his ancient science, has still a sort of residence there, and control of the place; and how, in one of the chambers, there is still his antique table, and his chair, and some rude old instruments and machinery, and a book, and everything in readiness, just as if he might still come back to finish some experiment. What it is important to say, is, that one of the chief things to which the old lord applied himself was to discover the means of prolonging his own life, so that its duration should be indefinite, if not infinite; and such was his science, that he was believed to have attained this magnificent and awful purpose.

"So, as you may suppose, the man of science had great joy in having done this thing, both for the pride of it, and because it was so delightful a thing to have before him the prospect of endless time, which he might spend in adding more and more to his science, and so

doing good to the world ; for the chief obstruction to the improvement of the world and the growth of knowledge is, that mankind cannot go straightforward in it ; but continually there have to be new beginnings, and it takes every new man half his life, if not the whole of it, to come up to the point where his predecessor left off. And so this noble man—this man of a noble purpose—spent many years in finding out this mighty secret ; and at last, it is said, he succeeded. But on what terms ?

“ Well ; it is said that the terms were dreadful and horrible ; inasmuch that the wise man hesitated whether it were lawful and desirable to take advantage of them, great as was the object in view.

“ You see, the object of the lord of — Hall was to take a life from the course of Nature, and Nature did not choose to be defrauded ; so that, great as was the power of this scientific man over her, she would not consent that he should escape the necessity of dying at his proper time, except upon condition of sacrificing some other life for his ; and this was to be done once for every thirty years that he chose to live, thirty years being the account of a generation of man ; and if in any way, in that time, this lord could be the death of a human being, that satisfied the requisition, and he might live on. There is a form of the legend which says, that one of the ingredients of the drink which the nobleman brewed by his science was the heart's blood of a pure young boy or girl. But this I reject, as too coarse an idea ; and, indeed, I think it may be taken to mean symbolically, that the person who desires to engross to himself more than his share of human life, must do it by sacrificing to his selfishness some dearest interest of another person, who has a good right to life, and may be as useful in it as he.

“ Now, this lord was a just man by nature, and if he had gone astray, it was greatly by reason of his earnest wish to do something for the poor, wicked, struggling, bloody, uncomfortable race of man, to which he belonged. He bethought himself whether he would have a right to take the life of one of those creatures, without their own consent, in order to prolong his own ; and after much arguing to and fro, he came to the conclusion that he should not have the right, unless it were a life over which he had control, and which was the next to his own. He looked round him ; he was a lonely and abstracted man, secluded by his studies from human affections, and there was but one human being whom he cared for ;—that was a beautiful kinswoman, an orphan, whom his father had brought up, and, dying, left her to his care. There was great kindness and affection—as great as the abstracted nature of his pursuits would allow—on the part of this lord towards the beautiful young girl ; but not what is called love—at least, he never acknowledged it to himself. But, looking into his heart, he saw that she, if any one, was to be the person whom the sacrifice demanded, and that he might kill twenty

others without effect, but, if he took the life of this one, it would make the charm strong and good.

"My friends, I have meditated many a time on this ugly feature of my legend, and am unwilling to take it in a literal sense; so I conceive its spiritual meaning (for everything, you know, has its spiritual meaning, which to the literal meaning is what the soul is to the body)—its spiritual meaning was, that to the deep pursuit of science we must sacrifice great part of the joy of life; that nobody can be great, and do great things, without giving up to death, so far as he regards his enjoyment of it, much that he would gladly enjoy; and in that sense I choose to take it. But the earthly old legend will have it, that this mad, high-minded, heroic, murderous lord did insist upon it with himself that he must murder this poor, loving, and beloved child.

"I do not wish to delay upon this horrible matter, and to tell you how he argued it with himself; and how, the more and more he argued it, the more reasonable it seemed, the more absolutely necessary, the more a duty that the terrible sacrifice should be made. Here was this great good to be done to mankind, and all that stood in the way of it was one little delicate life, so frail that it was likely enough to be blown out, any day, by the mere rude blast that the rush of life creates, as it streams along, or by any slightest accident; so good and pure, too, that she was quite unfit for this world, and not capable of any happiness in it; and all that was asked of her was to allow herself to be transported to a place where she would be happy, and would find companions fit for her—which he, her only present companion, certainly was not. In fine, he resolved to shed the sweet, fragrant blood of this little violet that loved him so.

"Well; let us hurry over this part of the story as fast as we can. He did slay this pure young girl; he took her into the wood near the house, an old wood that is standing yet, with some of its magnificent oaks; and then he plunged a dagger into her heart, after they had had a very tender and loving talk together, in which he had tried to open the matter tenderly to her, and make her understand, that though he was to slay her, it was really for the very reason that he loved her better than anything else in the world, and that he had far rather kill himself, if that would answer the purpose at all. Indeed, he is said to have offered her the alternative of slaying him, and taking upon herself the burthen of indefinite life, and the studies and pursuits by which he meant to benefit mankind. But she, it is said,—this noble, pure, loving child,—she looked up into his face and smiled sadly, and then snatching the dagger from him, she plunged it into her own heart. I cannot tell whether this be true or whether she waited to be killed by him; but this I know, that in the same circumstances I think I should have saved my lover, or my friend, the pain of killing me. There she lay dead, at

any rate, and he buried her in the wood, and returned to the house ; and, as it happened, he had set his right foot in her blood, and his shoe was wet in it, and by some miraculous fate, it left a track all along the wood-path, and into the house, and on the stone steps of the threshold, and up into his chamber, all along ; and the servants saw it the next day, and wondered, and whispered, and missed the fair young girl, and looked askance at their lord's right foot, and turned pale, all of them, as death.

"And next, the legend says, that Sir Forrester was struck with horror at what he had done, and could not bear the laboratory where he had toiled so long, and was sick to death of the object that he had pursued, and was most miserable, and fled from his old Hall, and was gone full many a day. But all the while he was gone there was the mark of a bloody footstep impressed upon the stone doorstep of the Hall. The track had lain all along through the wood-path, and across the lawn, to the old Gothic door of the Hall ; but the rain, the English rain that is always falling, had come the next day, and washed it all away. The track had lain, too, across the broad hall, and up the stairs, and into the lord's study ; but there it had lain on the rushes that were strewn there, and these the servants had gathered carefully up, and thrown them away, and spread fresh ones. So that it was only on the threshold that the mark remained.

"But the legend says, that wherever Sir Forrester went, in his wanderings about the world, he left a bloody track behind him. It was wonderful, and very inconvenient, this phenomenon. When he went into a church, you would see the track up the broad aisle, and a little red puddle in the place where he sat or knelt. Once he went to the king's court, and there being a track up to the very throne, the king frowned upon him, so that he never came there any more. Nobody could tell how it happened ; his foot was not seen to bleed, only there was the bloody track behind him, wherever he went ; and he was a horror-stricken man, always looking behind him to see the track, and then hurrying onward, as if to escape his own tracks ; but always they followed him as fast.

"In the hall of feasting, there was the bloody track to his chair. The learned men whom he consulted about this strange difficulty, conferred with one another, and with him, who was equal to any of them, and pished and pshawed, and said, 'Oh, there is nothing miraculous in this ; it is only a natural infirmity, which can easily be put an end too, though, perhaps, the stoppage of such an evacuation will cause damage to other parts of the frame.' Sir Forrester always said, 'Stop it, my learned brethren, if you can ; no matter what the consequences.' And they did their best, but without result ; so that he was still compelled to leave his bloody track on their college-rooms and combination-rooms, the same as elsewhere ; and in street and in wilderness ; yes, and in the battle-field, they say, his track looked

freshest and reddest of all. So, at last, finding the notice he attracted inconvenient, this unfortunate lord deemed it best to go back to his own Hall, where, living among faithful old servants born in the family, he could hush the matter up better than elsewhere, and not be stared at continually, or, glancing round, see people holding up their hands in terror at seeing a bloody track behind him. And so home he came, and there he saw the bloody track on the doorstep, and dolefully went into the hall, and up the stairs, an old servant ushering him into his chamber, and half a dozen others following behind, gazing, shuddering, pointing with quivering fingers, looking horror-stricken in one another's pale faces, and the moment he had passed, running to get fresh rushes, and to scour the stairs. The next day, Sir Forrester went into the wood, and by the aged oak he found a grave, and on the grave he beheld a beautiful crimson flower; the most gorgeous and beautiful, surely, that ever grew; so rich it looked, so full of potent juice. That flower he gathered; and the spirit of his scientific pursuits coming upon him, he knew that this was the flower, produced out of a human life, that was essential to the perfection of his recipe for immortal life; and he made the drink, and drank it, and became immortal in woe and agony, still studying, still growing wiser, and more wretched in every age. By-and-by he vanished from the old Hall, but not by death; for from generation to generation, they say that a bloody track is seen around that house, and sometimes it is tracked up into the chambers, so freshly that you see he must have passed a short time before; and he grows wiser and wiser, and lonelier and lonelier from age to age. And this is the legend of the bloody footstep, which I myself have seen at the hall-door. As to the flower, the plant of it continued for several years to grow out of the grave; and after awhile, perhaps a century ago, it was transplanted into the garden of — Hall, and preserved with great care, and is so still. And as the family attribute a kind of sacredness, or cursedness, to the flower, they can hardly be prevailed upon to give any of the seeds, or allow it to be propagated elsewhere, though the king should send to ask it. It is said, too, that there is still in the family the old lord's recipe for immortality, and that several of his collateral descendants have tried to concoct it, and instil the flower into it, and so give indefinite life; but unsuccessfully, because the seeds of the flower must be planted in a fresh grave of bloody death, in order to make it effectual."

So ended Sibyl's legend; in which Septimius was struck by a certain analogy to Aunt Keziah's Indian legend—both referring to a flower growing out of a grave; and also he did not fail to be impressed with the wild coincidence of this disappearance of an ancestor of the family long ago, and the appearance, at about the same epoch, of the first known ancestor of his own family, the man with wizard's



attributes, with the bloody footstep, and whose sudden disappearance became a myth, under the idea that the devil carried him away. Yet, on the whole, this wild tradition, doubtless becoming wilder in Sibyl's wayward and morbid fancy, had the effect to give him a sense of the fantasticalness of his present pursuit, and that, in adopting it, he had strayed into a region long abandoned to superstition, and where the shadows of forgotten dreams go when men are done with them; where past worships are; where great Pan went when he died to the outer world; a limbo into which living men sometimes stray when they think themselves sensiblest and wisest, and whence they do not often find their way back into the real world. Visions of wealth, visions of fame, visions of philanthropy—all visions find room here, and glide about without jostling. When Septimius came to look at the matter in his present mood, the thought occurred to him that he had perhaps got into such a limbo, and that Sibyl's legend, which looked so wild, might be all of a piece with his own present life; for Sibyl herself seemed an illusion, and so, most strangely, did Aunt Keziah, whom he had known all his life, with her homely and quaint characteristics; the grim doctor, with his brandy and his German pipe, impressed him in the same way; and these, altogether, made his homely cottage by the wayside seem an unsubstantial edifice, such as castles in the air are built of, and the ground he trod on unreal; and that grave, which he knew to contain the decay of a beautiful young man, but a fictitious swell formed by the fantasy of his eyes. All unreal; all illusion! Was Rose Garfield a deception too, with her daily beauty, and daily cheerfulness, and daily worth? In short, it was such a moment as I suppose all men feel (at least, I can answer for one), when the real scene and picture of life, swims, jars, shakes, seems about to be broken up and dispersed, like the picture in a smooth pond, when we disturb its tranquil mirror by throwing in a stone; and though the scene soon settles itself, and looks as real as before, a haunting doubt keeps close at hand, as long as we live, asking, "Is it stable? Am I sure of it? Am I certainly not dreaming? See; it trembles again, ready to dissolve."

Applying himself with earnest diligence to his attempt to decipher and interpret the mysterious manuscript, working with his whole mind and strength, Septimius did not fail of some flattering degree of success.

A good deal of the manuscript, as has been said, was in an ancient English script, although so uncouth and shapeless were the characters, that it was not easy to resolve them into letters, or to believe that they were anything but arbitrary and dismal blots and scrawls upon the yellow paper; without meaning, vague, like the misty and undefined germs of thought as they exist in our minds before clothing themselves in words. These, however, as he concentrated his mind

upon them, took distincter shape, like cloudy stars at the power of the telescope, and became sometimes English, sometimes Latin, strangely patched together, as if, so accustomed was the writer to use that language in which all the science of that age was usually embodied, he really mixed it unconsciously with the vernacular, or used both indiscriminately. There was a little Greek, too, but not much. Then frequently came in the cypher, to the study of which Septimius had applied himself for some time back, with the aid of the books borrowed from the college library, and not without success. Indeed, it appeared to him, on close observation, that it had not been the intention of the writer really to conceal what he had written from any earnest student, but rather to lock it up for safety in a sort of coffer, of which diligence and insight should be the key, and the keen intelligence with which the meaning was sought, should be the test of the seeker's being entitled to possess the secret treasure.

Amid a great deal of misty stuff, he found the document to consist chiefly, contrary to his supposition beforehand, of certain rules of life; he would have taken it, on a casual inspection, for an essay of counsel, addressed by some great and sagacious man to a youth in whom he felt an interest—so secure and good a doctrine of life was propounded, such excellent maxims there were, such wisdom in all matters that came within the writer's purview. It was as much like a digested synopsis of some old philosopher's wise rules of conduct, as anything else. But on closer inspection, Septimius, in his unsophisticated consideration of this matter, was not so well satisfied. True, everything that was said seemed not discordant with the rules of social morality; not unwise; it was shrewd, sagacious; it did not appear to infringe upon the rights of mankind; but there was something left out, something unsatisfactory—what was it? There was certainly a cold spell in the document; a magic, not of fire, but of ice; and Septimius the more exemplified its power, in that he soon began to be insensible of it. It affected him as if it had been written by some greatly wise and worldly-experienced man, like the writer of Ecclesiastes; for it was full of truth. It was a truth that does not make men better, though perhaps calmer; and beneath which the buds of happiness curl up like tender leaves in a frost. What was the matter with this document, that the young man's youth perished out of him as he read? What icy hand had written it, so that the heart was chilled out of the reader? Not that Septimius was sensible of this character; at least, not long,—for as he read, there grew upon him a mood of calm satisfaction, such as he had never felt before. His mind seemed to grow clearer; his perceptions most acute; his sense of the reality of things grew to be such, that he felt as if he could touch and handle all his thoughts, feel round about all their outline and circumference, and know them with a certainty, as if they were material things. Not that all this was in the document itself; but by studying it so ear-

nestly, and, as it were, creating its meaning anew for himself, out of such illegible materials, he caught the temper of the old writer's mind, after so many ages as that tract had lain in the mouldy and musty manuscript. He was magnetised with him ; a powerful intellect acted powerfully upon him ; perhaps, even, there was a sort of spell and mystic influence imbued into the paper, and mingled with the yellow ink, that steamed forth by the effort of this young man's earnest rubbing, as it were, and by the action of his mind, applied to it as intently as he possibly could ; and even his handling the paper, his bending over it, and breathing upon it, had its effect.

It is not in our power, nor in our wish, to produce the original form, nor yet the spirit, of a production which is better lost to the world ; because it was the expression of a human intellect originally greatly gifted, and capable of high things, but gone utterly astray, partly by its own subtlety, partly by yielding to the temptations of the lower part of its nature, by yielding the spiritual to a keen sagacity of lower things, until it was quite fallen ; and yet fallen in such a way, that it seemed not only to itself, but to mankind, not fallen at all, but wise and good, and fulfilling all the ends of intellect in such a life as ours, and proving, moreover, that earthly life was good, and all that the development of our nature demanded. All this is better forgotten ; better burnt ; better never thought over again ; and all the more, because its aspect was so wise, and even praiseworthy. But what we must preserve of it, were certain rules of life and moral diet, not exactly expressed in the document, but which, as it were, on its being duly received into Septimius's mind, were precipitated from the rich solution, and crystallised into diamonds, and which he found to be the moral dietetics, so to speak, by observing which he was to achieve the end of earthly immortality, whose physical nostrum was given in the recipe which, with the help of Doctor Portsoaken and his Aunt Keziah, he had already pretty satisfactorily made out.

"Keep thy heart at seventy throbs in a minute ; all more than that wears away life too quickly. If thy respiration be too quick, think with thyself that thou hast sinned against natural order and moderation.

Drink not wine nor strong drink ; and observe that this rule is worthiest in its symbolic meaning.

Bask daily in the sunshine, and let it rest on thy heart.

Run not ; leap not ; walk at a steady pace, and count thy paces per day.

If thou feelest, at any time, a throb of the heart, pause on the instant, and analyse it ; fix thy mental eye steadfastly upon it, and inquire why such commotion is.

Hate not any man nor woman ; be not angry, unless at any time thy blood seem a little cold and torpid ; cut out all rankling feelings,

they are poisonous to thee. If, in thy waking moments, or in thy dreams, thou hast thoughts of strife or unpleasantness with any man, strive quietly with thyself to forget him.

Have no friendships with an imperfect man, with a man in bad health, of violent passions, of any characteristic that evidently disturbs his own life, and so may have disturbing influence on thine. Shake not any man by the hand, because thereby, if there be any evil in the man, it is likely to be communicated to thee.

Kiss no woman if her lips be red ; look not upon her if she be very fair. Touch not her hand if thy finger-tips be found to thrill with hers ever so little. On the whole, shun woman, for she is apt to be a disturbing influence. If thou love her, all is over, and thy whole past and remaining labour and pains will be in vain.

Do some decent degree of good and kindness in thy daily life, for the result is a slight pleasurable sense that will seem to warm and delectate thee with felicitous self-laudings ; and all that brings thy thoughts to thyself tends to invigorate that central principle by the growth of which thou art to give thyself indefinite life.

Do not act manifestly evil ; it may grow upon thee, and corrode thee in after-years. Do not any foolish good act ; it may change thy wise habits.

Eat no spiced meats. Young chickens, new-fallen lambs, fruits, bread four days old, milk, freshest butter, will make thy fleshy tabernacle youthful.

From sick people, maimed wretches, afflicted people—all of whom show themselves at variance with things as they should be, from people beyond their wits, from people in a melancholic mood, from people in extravagant joy, from teething children, from dead corpses, turn away thine eyes and depart elsewhere.

If beggars haunt thee, let thy servants drive them away, thou withdrawing out of ear-shot.

Crying and sickly children, and teething children, as aforesaid, carefully avoid. Drink the breath of wholesome infants as often as thou conveniently canst—it is good for thy purpose ; also the breath of buxom maids, if thou mayest without undue disturbance of the flesh, drink it as a morning-draught, as medicine ; also the breath of cows as they return from rich pasture at eventide.

If thou seest human poverty, or suffering, and it trouble thee, strive moderately to relieve it, seeing that thus thy mood will be changed to a pleasant self-laudation.

Practise thyself in a certain continual smile, for its tendency will be to compose thy frame of being, and keep thee from too much wear.

Search not to see if thou hast a grey hair ; scrutinise not thy forehead to find a wrinkle ; nor the corners of thy eyes to discover if they be corrugated. Such things, being gazed at, daily take heart and grow.

Desire nothing too fervently, not even life ; yet keep thy hold upon it mightily, quietly, unshakeably, for as long as thou really art resolved to live, Death, with all his force, shall have no power against thee.

Walk not beneath tottering ruins, nor houses being put up, nor climb to the top of a mast, nor approach the edge of a precipice, nor stand in the way of the lightning, nor cross a swollen river, nor voyage at sea, nor ride a skittish horse, nor be shot at by an arrow, nor confront a sword, nor put thyself in the way of violent death ; for this is hateful, and breaketh through all wise rules.

Say thy prayers at bed-time, if thou deemest it will give thee quieter sleep ; yet let it not trouble thee if thou forgettest them.

Change thy shirt daily ; thereby thou castest off yesterday's decay, and imbibest the freshness of the morning's life, which enjoy with smelling of roses, and other healthy and fragrant flowers, and live the longer for it. Roses are made to that end.

Read not great poets ; they stir up thy heart ; and the human heart is a soil which, if deeply stirred, is apt to give out noxious vapours."

Such were some of the precepts which Septimius gathered and reduced to definite form out of this wonderful document ; and he appreciated their wisdom, and saw clearly that they must be absolutely essential to the success of the medicine with which they were connected. In themselves, almost, they seemed capable of prolonging life to an indefinite period, so wisely were they conceived, so well did they apply to the causes which almost invariably wear away this poor, short life of men, years and years before even the shattered constitutions that they received from their forefathers need compel them to die. He deemed himself well rewarded for all his labour and pains, should nothing else follow but his reception and proper appreciation of these wise rules ; but continually, as he read the manuscript, more truths, and, for aught I know, profounder and more practical ones, developed themselves ; and, indeed, small as the manuscript looked, Septimius thought that he should find a volume as big as the most ponderous folio in the college library too small to contain its wisdom. It seemed to drip and distil with precious fragrant drops, whenever he took it out of his desk ; it diffused wisdom like those vials of perfume which, small as they look, keep diffusing an airy wealth of fragrance for years and years together, scattering their virtue in incalculable volumes of invisible vapour, and yet are none the less in bulk for all they give ; whenever he turned over the yellow leaves, bits of gold, diamonds of good size, precious pearls, seemed to drop out from between them.

And now ensued a surprise that, though of a happy kind, was almost too much for him to bear ; for it made his heart beat

considerably faster than the wise rules of his manuscript prescribed. Going up on his hill-top, as summer wore away (he had not been there for some time) and walking by the little flowery hillock, as so many a hundred times before, what should he see there but a new flower, that during the time he had been poring over the manuscript so sedulously, had developed itself, blossomed, and put forth its petals, bloomed into full perfection, and now, with the dew of the morning upon it, was waiting to offer itself to Septimius? He trembled as he looked at it, it was too much almost to bear;—it was so very beautiful, so very stately, so very rich, so very mysterious and wonderful. It was like a person, like a life! Whence did it come? He stood apart from it, gazing in wonder; tremulously taking in its aspect, and thinking of the legends he had heard from Aunt Keziah and from Sibyl Dacy; and how that this flower, like the one that their wild traditions told of, had grown out of a grave—out of a grave in which he had laid one slain by himself.

The flower was of the richest crimson, illuminated with a golden centre of a perfect and stately beauty. From the best descriptions that I have been able to gain of it, it was more like a dahlia than any other flower with which I have acquaintance; yet it does not satisfy me to believe it really of that species, for the dahlia is not a flower of any deep characteristics, either lively or malignant, and this flower, which Septimius found so strangely, seems to have had one or the other. If I have rightly understood, it had a fragrance which the dahlia lacks; and there was something hidden in its centre, a mystery, even in its fullest bloom, not developing itself so openly as the heartless, yet not dishonest, dahlia. I remember in England to have seen a flower at Eaton Hall, in Cheshire, in those magnificent gardens, which may have been like this, but my remembrance of it is not sufficiently distinct to enable me to describe it better than by saying that it was crimson, with a gleam of gold in its centre, which yet was partly hidden. It had many petals of great richness.

Septimius, bending eagerly over the plant, saw that this was not to be the only flower that it would produce that season; on the contrary, there was to be a great abundance of them, a luxuriant harvest; as if the crimson offspring of this one plant would cover the whole hillock—as if the dead youth beneath had burst into a resurrection of many crimson flowers! And in its veiled heart, moreover, there was a mystery like death, although it seemed to cover something bright and golden.

Day after day the strange crimson flower bloomed more and more abundantly, until it seemed almost to cover the little hillock, which became a mere bed of it, apparently turning all its capacity of production to this flower; for the other plants, Septimius thought, seemed to shrink away, and give place to it, as if they were unworthy to compare with the richness, glory, and worth of this their queen.

The fervent summer burned into it, the dew and the rain ministered to it; the soil was rich, for it was a human heart contributing its juices—a heart in its fiery youth sodden in its own blood, so that passion, unsatisfied loves and longings, ambition that never won its object, tender dreams and throbs, angers, lusts, hates, all concentrated by life, came sprouting in it, and its mysterious being, and streaks and shadows, had some meaning in each of them.

The two girls, when they next ascended the hill, saw the strange flower, and Rose admired it, and wondered at it, but stood at a distance, without showing an attraction towards it, rather an undefined aversion, as if she thought it might be a poison flower; at any rate she would not be inclined to wear it in her bosom. Sibyl Dacy examined it closely, touched its leaves, smelt it, looked at it with a botanist's eye, and at last remarked to Rose—"Yes, it grows well in this new soil; methinks it looks like a new human life."

"What is the strange flower?" asked Rose.

"The *Sanguinea sanguinissima*," said Sibyl.

It so happened about this time that poor Aunt Keziah, in spite of her constant use of that bitter mixture of hers, was in a very bad state of health. She looked all of an unpleasant yellow, with blood-shot eyes; she complained terribly of her inwards. She had an ugly rheumatic hitch in her motion from place to place, and was heard to mutter many wishes that she had a broomstick to fly about upon, and she used to bind up her head with a dshelout, or what looked to be such, and would sit by the kitchen fire even in the warm days, bent over it, crouching as if she wanted to take the whole fire into her poor cold heart or gizzard—groaning regularly with each breath a spiteful and resentful groan, as if she fought womanfully with her infirmities; and she continually smoked her pipe, and sent out the breath of her complaint visibly in that evil odour, and sometimes she murmured a little prayer, but somehow or other the evil and bitterness, acidity, pepperiness, of her natural disposition overcame the acquired grace which compelled her to pray, inasmuch that, after all, you would have thought the poor old woman was cursing with all her rheumatic might. All the time an old, broken-nosed, brown earthen jug, covered with the lid of a black teapot, stood on the edge of the embers, steaming for ever, and sometimes bubbling a little, and giving a great puff, as if it were sighing and groaning in sympathy with poor Aunt Keziah, and when it sighed there came a great steam of herby fragrance, not particularly pleasant, into the kitchen. And ever and anon—half a dozen times it might be—of an afternoon, Aunt Keziah took a certain bottle from a private receptacle of hers, and also a teacup, and likewise a little, old-fashioned silver teaspoon, with which she measured three teaspoonfuls of some spirituous liquor into the teacup, half filled the cup with the hot decoction, drank it off, gave a grunt of content, and for the space of half-an-hour appeared to find life tolerable.



But one day poor Aunt Keziah found herself unable, partly from rheumatism, partly from other sickness or weakness, and partly from dolorous ill-spirits, to keep about any longer, so she betook herself to her bed; and betimes in the forenoon Septimius heard a tremendous knocking on the floor of her bedchamber, which happened to be the room above his own. He was the only person in or about the house; so, with great reluctance, he left his studies, which were upon the recipe, in respect to which he was trying to make out the mode of concoction, which was told in such a mysterious way that he could not well tell either the quantity of the ingredients, the mode of trituration, nor in what way their virtue was to be extracted and combined.

Running hastily up-stairs, he found Aunt Keziah lying in bed, and groaning with great spite and bitterness; so that, indeed, it seemed not imprudential that such an inimical state of mind towards the human race was accompanied with an almost inability of motion, else it would not be safe to be within a considerable distance of her.

"Seppy, you good-for-nothing, are you going to see me lying here, dying, without trying to do anything for me?"

"Dying, Aunt Keziah!" repeated the young man. "I hope not! What can I do for you? Shall I go for Rose? or call a neighbour in? or the doctor?"

"No, no, you fool!" said the afflicted person. "You can do all that anybody can for me; and that is to put my mixture on the kitchen fire till it steams, and is just ready to bubble; then measure three teaspoonfuls—or it may be four, as I am very 'bad—of spirit into a teacup, fill it half full—or it may be quite full, for I am very bad, as I said afore: six teaspoonfuls of spirit into a cup of mixture, and let me have it as soon as may be; and don't break the cup, nor spill the precious mixture, for goodness knows when I can go into the woods to gather any more. Ah me! ah me! it's a wicked, miserable world, and I am the most miserable creature in it. Be quick, you good-for-nothing, and do as I say!"

Septimius hastened down; but as he went, a thought came into his head, which it occurred to him might result in great benefit to Aunt Keziah, as well as to the great cause of science and human good, and to the promotion of his own purpose, in the first place. A day or two ago, he had gathered several of the beautiful flowers, and laid them in the fervid sun to dry; and they now seemed to be in about the state in which the old woman was accustomed to use her herbs, so far as Septimius had observed. Now, if these flowers were really, as there was so much reason for supposing, the one ingredient that had for hundreds of years been missing out of Aunt Keziah's nostrum—if it was this which that strange Indian sagamore had mingled with his drink with such beneficial effect—why should not Septimius now restore it, and if it would not make his beloved aunt young again, at least assuage the violent symptoms, and perhaps

prolong her valuable life some years, for the solace and delight of her numerous friends? Septimius, like other people of investigating and active minds, had a great tendency to experiment, and so good an opportunity as the present, where (perhaps he thought) there was so little to be risked at worst, and so much to be gained, was not to be neglected; so, without more ado, he stirred three of the crimson flowers into the earthen jug, set it on the edge of the fire, stirred it well, and when it steamed, threw up little scarlet bubbles, and was about to boil, he measured out the spirits, as Aunt Keziah had bidden him, and then filled the teacup.

"Ah, this will do her good; little does she think, poor old thing, what a rare and costly medicine is about to be given her. This will set her on her feet again."

The hue was somewhat changed, he thought, from what he had observed of Aunt Keziah's customary decoction; instead of a turbid yellow, the crimson petals of the flower had tinged it, and made it almost red; not a brilliant red, however, nor the least inviting in appearance. Septimius smelt it, and thought he could distinguish a little of the rich odour of the flower, but was not sure. He considered whether to taste it; but the horrible flavour of Aunt Keziah's decoction recurred strongly to his remembrance, and he concluded, that were he evidently at the point of death, he might possibly be bold enough to taste it again; but that nothing short of the hope of a century's existence, at least, would repay another taste of that fierce and nauseous bitterness. Aunt Keziah loved it; and as she brewed, so let her drink.

He went up-stairs, careful not to spill a drop of the brimming cup, and approached the old woman's bed-side, where she lay, groaning as before, and breaking out into a spiteful croak the moment he was within earshot.

"You don't care whether I live or die," said she. "You've been waiting in hopes I shall die, and so save yourself further trouble."

"By no means, Aunt Keziah," said Septimius. "Here is the medicine, which I have warmed, and measured out, and mingled, as well as I knew how; and I think it will do you a great deal of good."

"Won't you taste it, Seppy, my dear?" said Aunt Keziah, mollified by the praise of her beloved mixture. "Drink first, dear, so that my sick old lips need not taint it. You look pale, Septimius; it will do you good."

"No, Aunt Keziah, I do not need it; and it were a pity to waste your precious drink," said he.

"It does not look quite the right colour," said Aunt Keziah, as she took the cup in her hand. "You must have dropped some soot into it." Then as she raised it to her lips, "It does not smell quite right. But, woe's me! how can I expect anybody but myself to make this precious drink as it should be?"

She drank it off at two gulps ; for she appeared to hurry it off faster than usual, as if not tempted by the exquisiteness of its flavour, to dwell upon it so long.

"You have not made it just right, Seppy," said she in a milder tone than before, for she seemed to feel the customary soothing influence of the draught, "but you'll do better the next time. It had a queer taste, methought ; or is it that my mouth is getting out of taste ? Hard times it will be for poor Aunt Kezzy, if she's to lose her taste for the medicine that, under Providence, has saved her life for so many years."

She gave back the cup to Septimius, after looking a little curiously at the dregs.

"It looks like blood-root, don't it ?" said she. "Perhaps it's my own fault after all. I gathered a fresh bunch of the yarbs yesterday afternoon, and put them to steep, and it may be I was a little blind, for it was between daylight and dark, and the moon shone on me before I had finished. I thought how the witches used to gather their poisonous stuff at such times, and what pleasant uses they made of it ; it,—but those are sinful thoughts, Seppy, sinful thoughts ! so I'll say a prayer, and try to go to sleep. I feel very noddly all at once."

Septimius drew the bed-clothes up about her shoulders, for she complained of being very chilly, and carefully putting her stick within reach, went down to his own room, and resumed his studies, trying to make out from those aged hieroglyphics, to which he was now so well accustomed, what was the precise method of making the elixir of immortality. Sometimes, as men in deep thought do, he rose from his chair, and walked to and fro, the four or five steps or so, that conveyed him from end to end of his little room. At one of these times he chanced to look in the little looking-glass that hung between the windows, and was startled at the paleness of his face. It was quite white, indeed. Septimius was not in the least a foppish young man ; careless he was in dress, though often his apparel took an unsought picturesqueness that set off his slender, agile figure, perhaps from some quality of spontaneous arrangement that he had inherited from his Indian ancestry. Yet many women might have found a charm in that dark, thoughtful face, with its hidden fire and energy, although Septimius never thought of its being handsome, and seldom looked at it. Yet now he was drawn to it by seeing how strangely white it was, and gazing at it, he observed that since he considered it last, a very deep furrow, or corrugation, or fissure, it might almost be called, had indented his brow, rising from the commencement of his nose towards the centre of the forehead. And he knew it was his brooding thought, his fierce, hard determination, his intense concentrativeness, for so many months, that had been digging that furrow ; and it must prove indeed a potent specific of the life-water that would smooth that away, and restore him all the youth and elasticity that he had buried in that profound grave.

But why was he so pale? He could have supposed himself startled by some ghastly thing that he had just seen; by a corpse in the next room, for instance; or else by the foreboding that one would soon be there; but yet he was conscious of no tremor in his frame, no terror in his heart; as why should there be any? Feeling his own pulse, he found the strong, regular beat that should be there. He was not ill, nor affrighted; not expectant of any pain. Then why so ghastly pale? And why, moreover, Septimius, did you listen so earnestly for any sound in Aunt Keziah's chamber? Why did you creep on tiptoe, once, twice, three times, up to the old woman's chamber, and put your ear to the key-hole, and listen breathlessly? Well; it must have been that he was sub-conscious that he was trying a bold experiment, and that he had taken this poor old woman to be the medium of it, in the hope, of course, that it would turn out well; yet with other views than her interest in the matter. What was the harm of that? Medical men, no doubt, are always doing so, and he was a medical man for the time. Then why was he so pale?

He sat down and fell into a reverie, which perhaps was partly suggested by that chief furrow which he had seen, and which we have spoken of, in his brow. He considered whether there was anything in this pursuit of his that used up life particularly fast; so that perhaps, unless he were successful soon, he should be incapable of renewal; for, looking within himself, and considering his mode of being, he had a singular fancy that his heart was gradually drying up, and that he must continue to get some moisture for it, or else it would soon be like a withered leaf. Supposing his pursuit were vain, what a waste he was making of that little treasure of golden days, which was his all! Could this be called life, which he was leading now? How unlike that of other young men! How unlike that of Robert Hagburn, for example! There had come news yesterday of his having performed a gallant part in the battle of Monmouth, and being promoted to be a captain for his brave conduct. Without thinking of long life, he really lived in heroic actions and emotions; he got much life in a little, and did not fear to sacrifice a lifetime of torpid breaths, if necessary, to the ecstasy of a glorious death!

[It appears from a written sketch by the author of this story, that he changed his first plan of making Septimius and Rose lovers, and she was to be represented as his half-sister, and in the copy for publication this alteration would have been made.—Ed.]

And then Robert loved, too, loved his sister Rose, and felt, doubtless, an immortality in that passion. Why could not Septimius love too? It was forbidden! Well, no matter, whom could he have loved? Who, in all this world, would have been suited to his secret, brooding heart, that he could have let her into its mysterious chambers, and walked with her from one cavernous gloom to another, and said, "Here are my treasures. I make thee mistress of all these; with all these goods I thee endow." And then, revealing to her his

great secret and purpose of gaining immortal life, have said : "This shall be thine, too. Thou shalt share with me. We will walk along the endless path together, and keep one another's hearts warm, and so be content to live."

Ah, Septimius ! but now you are getting beyond those rules of yours, which, cold as they are, have been drawn out of a subtle philosophy, and might, were it possible to follow them out, suffice to do all that you ask of them ; but if you break them, you do it at the peril of your earthly immortality. Each warmer and quicker throb of the heart wears away so much of life. The passions, the affections, are a wine not to be indulged in. Love, above all, being in its essence an immortal thing, cannot be long contained in an earthly body, [but would wear it out with its own secret power, softly invigorating as it seems. You must be cold, therefore, Septimius ; you must not even earnestly and passionately desire this immortality that seems so necessary to you. Else the very wish will prevent the possibility of its fulfilment.

By-and-by, to call him out of these rhapsodies, came Rose home ; and finding the kitchen hearth cold, and Aunt Keziah missing, and no dinner by the fire, which was smouldering—nothing but the portentous earthen jug, which fumed, and sent out long, ill-flavoured sighs, she tapped at Septimius' door, and asked him what was the matter.

"Aunt Keziah has had an ill-turn," said Septimius, "and has gone to bed."

"Poor Auntie !" said Rose, with her quick sympathy. "I will this moment run up and see if she needs anything."

"No, Rose," said Septimius, "she has doubtless gone to sleep, and will awake as well as usual. It would displease her much were you to miss your afternoon school ; so you had better set the table with whatever there is left of yesterday's dinner, and leave me to take care of Auntie."

"Well," said Rose ; "she loves you best ; but if she be really ill, I shall give up my school and nurse her."

"No doubt," said Septimius, "she will be about the house again to-morrow."

So Rose ate her frugal dinner (consisting chiefly of purslain, and some other garden herbs, which her thrifty aunt had prepared for boiling), and went away as usual to her school ; for Aunt Keziah, as aforesaid, had never encouraged the tender ministrations of Rose, whose orderly, womanly character, with its well-defined orb of daily and civilised duties, had always appeared to strike her as tame ; and she once said to her : "You are no squaw, child, and you'll never make a witch." Nor would she even so much as let Rose put her tea to steep, or do anything whatever for herself personally ; though, certainly, she was not backward in requiring of her a due share of labour for the general housekeeping.

*(To be continued.)*

## LITERARY LEGISLATORS.

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### III. LORD HOUGHTON AND SIR JOHN HANMER.

WHAT is the foundation of the prejudice that many intelligent men, some of them of even high and commanding powers, have shown against the presence of literary men in the legislature of a country? We can understand a human cannon-ball of a fellow like Napoleon looking down upon "ideologists" and "phrase-spinners," as he called men of letters. It is plain that a politician may think he sees reasons of expediency against clerics sitting in Parliament. But why should Auguste Comte almost foam at the mouth when he speaks of Royer-Collard, and think the presence of men of letters in the Chamber a peril to France? And that, too, when he could admire unhappy Louis Napoleon! Louis Napoleon was, though not nominally and professedly, a man of letters, the very type of the phrase-spinner and ideologist in the wrong place. His estimates of history, politics, sociology, and the life around him, were of the very quality that is supposed to be proper to the man of letters turning his hand to politics. But the literary man in council, and the literary dictator, are two very different persons. Generally, perhaps universally speaking, the man of intense literary *genius* is better out of politics proper; and perhaps there is, to go no further, a mania of classification in the French literary mind which makes it unsafe for political purposes. But where is the presumption that literary faculty—which is, in brief, the faculty of effective expression, and of ordering ideas for ends of such expression—must make a man unpractical? There is a general presumption that no one is likely to be powerfully and healthily developed in many directions at once; but even this must be received with qualification. Milton and some of the great Elizabethans rise at once to the tip of the pen.

No one has yet shown that Burke could not have proved himself a great and wise *dictator* even. If men like him and, say, Coleridge had (as they ought to have) the discretion to choose their lieutenants and intermediaries from another class of men, there is no proof that they could not govern well, and be very practical indeed. When one thinks of Lamartine and Victor Hugo (to take near and obvious examples), it possibly suggests itself that the literary mind is apt to fail by taking views too remote, and aiming at more than can be accomplished; that is, by trying all at once to make ideals into facts. But these things are not necessarily so. There are men and men, even among ideologists and phrase-spinners. Who introduced, or

nearly succeeded in introducing, the first steam-boat into Mediterranean waters,—managed the money matters, and conducted the whole attempt with a sanity, patience and tact, that the late Mr. Brassey could hardly have exceeded? Who expressed over and over again his fear that the cause of democracy and political “freedom” in general would go on too fast, so that something of the precious fruits of tradition, with the high and sweet liberty they have brought with them, would be lost in the rash heyday and hurry of progress? It was the “screeching” poet of the “*Epipsychidion*,”—who turned sick at the sight of the House of Commons’ lobby, and said the crew of a Greek barque reminded him more of hell than of Hellas. And now let us read a sentence or two from a letter by another writer:—

“Governors, in these days, lose the title of men, in exchange for that of diplomate or minister. We breathe a sort of official atmosphere. All the departments of Government have strayed far from simplicity, which is the greatest of strength . . .

“Notwithstanding the noise the Liberals make in favour of the cause of Napoleon, I cannot but think he has done more harm to the life of liberty than anyone else would have done. Not that the divine-right gentlemen have done, or intend to do, any good; no, they have taken a lesson of him, and will do all the further harm he would have done, without any of the good.

“Dilke, whom you know to be a Godwin-perfectibility man, pleases himself with the idea that America will be the country to take up the human intellect where England leaves off. I differ there with him greatly: a country like the United States, whose greatest men are Franklins and Washingtons, will never do that: they are great men doubtless; but how are they to be compared to those our countrymen, Milton and the two Sidneys? The one is a philosophical Quaker, full of mean and thrifty maxims; the other sold the very charger who had taken him through all his battles. Those Americans are great, but they are not sublime men; the humanity of the United States can never reach the sublime.”

Incredible as it may appear, it was John Keats who wrote these lines. His estimate of the American people may to some appear very short in its perspective; but nobody can deny the sagacity.

There is, in truth, no sound reason against the presence of men of letters in legislative assemblies. A far stronger case could be made out against men of science; but every case of the kind is a blunder. In a representative Parliament, we want all the help we can get, from whatever source; and there are actually some presumptions in favour, rather than against, the occasional presence there of men of letters. They are rarely long-winded; they have usually a quick eye for the essential features of a question, and an impatience of mere talk. This is true, though it might seem, to a critic of the Napoleon stamp, about the last quality a man of letters would be likely to possess. Then they are likely to be very tolerant. In no class is their speciality so little of a speciality. Painters, musicians, divines, doctors, lawyers, and last, not least, men of science, are all apt to be narrow,



and even ill-informed,\* on topics outside of their specialities. Men of science—even of the rank of Sir John Lubbock and Professor Playfair—are apt to slide into bigotry as sand-blind as that of a mediæval cleric; and the meddling of experts in general promises to prove one of the political scourges of the new generation. But the literary man is usually catholic—sometimes catholic even to indifferentism; and though he is often a bad hand at putting his own practical wisdom into practice, he sometimes proves to be the most practical in a very practical company. Mr. Helps has boldly and powerfully attacked the prejudice of men of facts, as they call themselves, against “men of ideas and words,” and to him I refer the reader for much interesting matter upon the question. He mentions, among other things, a case in which the very best suggestions that were sent in for consideration in a certain very practical matter came from a distinctively literary man. This is a description which applies eminently to himself, and yet there is, perhaps, no book of as few pages from which a greater number of wise, practical things could be gathered than his recently published “Thoughts upon Government.”

I believe there is no possibility of laying down any general rule as to the fitness of men of letters for business in general, or, by consequence, for the particular business of legislation. And why should there be? Why should men who write books and articles be more readily classifiable in this respect than men who mix drugs or calculate railway curves? One thing, indeed, is pretty certain, namely, that there is a touch of genius in every man of letters who is anything much more than an article-manufacturer, and that, as a rule, the temperament in which genius is apt to reside has a tendency to hate mechanism. This, it may be said, is unfavourable for purposes of public business; but so, too, are other things; for example, prosiness of speech and incapacity to seize the salient points of a case. On the whole, no doubt, men of genius are much better employed out of Parliament than they would be in it; but, in saying this, I lay stress upon the word employed, for they may be in the legislature, and, without doing much there, serve a very useful purpose. “Emollunt mores, my boy,” as Colonel Newcome, magnificently ungrammatical, used to say to Clive. The mere presence of Mr. Mill in the House of Commons for a short time did that “extraordinary assembly,” as Dickens called it, great good. I have been in a committee-room of the House of Lords when a railway bill was on, and seen the Duke of

\* The general culture of the modern man of letters is likely to be so wide, and his memory and quickness of perception so highly cultivated, that it might be a positive advantage to the Bench,—I am, of course, not supposing that the thing could be done,—if the judge had a literary assessor. In the case of *Saurin v. Starr*, the Lord Chief Justice cross-examined poor Miss Saurin with much severity, but in a wholly wrong sense (upon a letter), just for the want of a literary suggestion or two. This is one example out of hundreds.

Argyll, sitting by his English title of Lord Sundridge, master a long, well-fought question so easily and rapidly—I mean *à vue d'œil*—that, as far as he was concerned, the case might have been stopped after the first two hours. I remember once being in a similar committee-room when Lord Houghton was on the committee. He wrote letters, he walked backwards and forwards to the terrace-window, looked out upon the sun-lit river, came back to his chair, asked two questions, and—dropped off to sleep. But no member of that committee had more completely mastered the case, as very soon appeared when the time came for giving a decision. “Shall we wake Milnes?” said the chairman, in a whisper audible enough to the public outside the barrier—(his peerage was then rather new)—and just nudged “Milnes,” whispering, “What do you say, Houghton?” “Oh,” said his lordship, opening his eyes, “give ‘em the running powers;” and walked off to the window again to enjoy the view. It is not likely that men of the mould of Lord Houghton, or Sir John Hanmer, or the author of “The Cloister Life of Charles V.,” would ever be very energetic or busy legislators; but their mere presence is ornamental; at the lowest they are harmless. They are often useful; and whatever party-name they take, they are sure to be on the Liberal side. We may feel certain that the author\* of the sonnet I am going to quote would give a wise vote on the Alabama question—if his vote were needed.

Great people, whom across the Atlantic Seas,  
Our thoughts, expanding with the space, behold;  
And know thy starry front, serene and bold,  
E'en as Orion, when the winters freeze;  
Thy distance fades by changing moon's degrees;  
Peace hovers o'er the middle depths, to hold  
On either side her scales of antique gold,  
Spanning the depths: but not alone for these;  
But that ye come from an ancestral line  
That hence departed, keeping freedom's ways,  
And speak the language that the band divine  
And storied memories of great deeds did raise,  
When the old world was wondrous; let the sign  
Of love shine out betwixt us, in our days.

From the poetry and prose of Lord Houghton, it is perfectly plain to see that he, too, would be, as he has been, on the Liberal side, and that he might be depended upon to take humane and even tender views of social questions. It is hard to guess why a man should be unfit either for the House of Commons or the House of Lords, because he wrote this verse—

\* Sir John Hanmer, I believe, the present member for Flint; but I can get no certain clue. This sonnet, with some others of similar quality, is given by Leigh Hunt in his “Book of the Sonnets.”

He, who for Love has undergone  
 The worst that can befall  
 Is happier thousand-fold than one  
 Who never loved at all ;

A grace within his soul has reigned,  
 Which nothing else can bring—  
 Thank God for all that I have gained,  
 By that high suffering !

Lord Houghton's "Poetry for the People," as he called it, is wanting in the robustness which could alone lend it popular currency, and from some of its passages (*e. g.* "Rich and Poor"), as well as from his recent apology for the functions of the Upper House—a matter on which I here express no opinion—one can guess that he has no resolutely defined *theory* of Liberalism. But then, in reading him, you constantly get a suspicion that he believes every possible theory or every possible subject ends in a blind alley. But if he is of opinion that "grey is all theory," he has at least found out that "green is the golden tree of life,"—now and then ;—for we are not quite certain that it goes further. It is twenty years since I heard a bundle of rags in a gutter singing the following beautiful poem, or part of it ; and it is not three years since I heard the same bundle of rags, scarcely changed in face, voice, coat, trowsers, spatterdashes, or otherwise, sing the same song in another gutter :—

#### PASTORAL SONG.

I wandered by the brook-side,  
 I wandered by the mill,—  
 I could not hear the brook flow,  
 The noisy wheel was still ;  
 There was no burr of grasshopper,  
 No chirp of any bird,  
 But the beating of my own heart  
 Was all the sound I heard.

I sat beneath the elm-tree,  
 I watched the long, long, shade,  
 And as it grew still longer,  
 I did not feel afraid ;  
 For I listened for a footfall,  
 I listened for a word,—  
 But the beating of my own heart  
 Was all the sound I heard.

He came not,—no, he came not,—  
 The night came on alone,—  
 The little stars sat one by one,  
 Each on his golden throne ;  
 The evening air past by my cheek,  
 The leaves above were stirr'd,—  
 But the beating of my own heart  
 Was all the sound I heard.

Fast silent tears were flowing,  
 When something stood behind,—  
 A hand was on my shoulder,  
 I knew its touch was kind :  
 It drew me nearer—nearer,—  
 We did not speak one word,  
 For the beating of our own hearts  
 Was all the sound we heard.

I have met people who can see nothing in this lovely piece of simple song. So much the worse for *them*. It is a misfortune to me to come across readers so inapprehensive, but their ill-luck in being the subjects of the inapprehensiveness is worse than mine. Perhaps we may be more lucky with one or two other love-poems from the same volume :—

#### LOVE-THOUGHTS.

All down the linden-alley's morning shade  
 Thy form with childly rapture I pursue ;  
 No hazel-bowered brook can seek the glade,  
 With steps more joyous and with course more true.

But when all haste and hope I reach my goal,  
 And Thou at once thy full and earnest eyes  
 Turnest upon me, my encumbered soul  
 Bows down in shame and trembles with surprise.

I rise exalted on thy moving grace,  
 Peace and good-will in all thy voice I hear ;  
 Yet if the sudden wonders of thy face  
 Fall on me, joy is weak and turns to fear.

Again :—

I would be calm,—I would be free  
 From thoughts and images of Thee ;  
 But Nature and thy will conspire  
 To bar me from my fair desire.

The trees are moving with thy grace,  
 The water *will* reflect thy face,  
 The very flowers are plotting deep,  
 And in thy breath their odours steep.

The breezes, when mine eyes I close,  
 With sighs, just like mine own, impose ;  
 The nightingale then takes her part,  
 And plays thy voice against my heart.

If Thou then in one golden chain  
 Canst bind the world, I strive in vain ;  
 Perchance my wisest scheme would be  
 To join this great conspiracy.

This last might almost be Mr. Matthew Arnold, if it were not so like Herrick, or one or other of Herrick's compeers.

From "Palm Leaves" we will take (slightly curtailed) a poem of a very different character :—

#### THE TENT.

Why should a man raise stone and wood  
Between him and the sky ?  
Why should he fear the brotherhood  
Of all things from on high ?  
Why should a man not raise his form  
As shelterless and free  
As stands in sunshine or in storm  
The mountain and the tree ?

Or if we thus, as creatures frail,  
Before our time should die,  
And courage and endurance fail  
Weak Nature to supply ;  
Let us at least a dwelling choose,  
The simplest that can keep  
From parching heat and noxious dews  
Our pleasure and our sleep.

The Fathers of our mortal race,  
While still remembrance nursed  
Traditions of the glorious place  
Whence Adam fled accursed,—  
Rested in tents, as best became  
Children, whose mother earth  
Had overspread with sinful shame  
The beauty of her birth.

In cold they sought the sheltered nook,  
In heat the airy shade,  
And oft their casual home forsook  
The morrow it was made ;  
Diverging many separate roads,  
They wandered, fancy-driven,  
Nor thought of other fixed abodes  
Than Paradise or heaven.

And while this holy sense remained,  
'Mid easy shepherd cares,  
In tents they often entertained  
The Angels unawares :  
And to their spirits' fervid gaze  
The mystery was revealed,  
How the world's wound in future days  
Should by God's love be healed.

We all have much we would forget—  
 Be that forgotten now !  
 And placid Hope, instead, shall set  
 Her seal upon your brow :  
 Imagination's prophet eye  
 By her shall view unfurled  
 The future greatnesses that lie  
 Hid in the Eastern world.

To slavish tyrannies their term  
 Of terror she foretells ;  
 She brings to bloom the faith whose germ  
 In Islam deeply dwells ;  
 Accomplishing each mighty birth  
 That shall one day be born  
 From marriage of the western earth  
 With nations of the morn !

Then fold the Tent—then on again ;  
 One spot of ashen black,  
 The only sign that here has lain  
 The traveller's recent track :  
 And gladly forward, safe to find  
 At noon and eve a home,  
 Till we have left our Tent behind,  
 The homeless ocean-foam !

Nor without a purpose, we will add, also curtailed, the following from  
 " Poetry for the People " :—

There is a thought so purely blest,  
 That to its use I oft repair,  
 When evil breaks my spirit's rest,  
 And pleasure is but varied care :  
 A thought to gild the stormiest skies,  
 To deck with flowers the bleakest moor,—  
 A thought whose home is paradise,—  
 The charities of Poor to Poor.

It were not for the Rich to blame,  
 If they, whom Fortune seems to scorn,  
 Should vent their ill-content and shame  
 On others less or more forlorn ;  
 But, that the veriest needs of life  
 Should be dispensed with freer hand,  
 Than all their stores and treasures rife—  
 Is not for *them* to understand :

To give the stranger's children bread,  
 Of your precarious board the spoil—  
 To watch your helpless neighbour's bed,  
 And, sleepless, meet the morrow's toil ;—  
 The gifts, not proffered once alone,  
 The daily sacrifice of years,—  
 And, when all else to give is gone,  
 The precious gifts of love and tears !

What record of triumphant deed,  
 What virtue pompously unfurled,  
 Can *thus* refute the gloomy creed  
 That parts from God our living world ?  
 O Misanthrope ! deny who would—  
 O Moralists ! deny who can—  
 Seeds of almost impossible good,  
 Deep in the deepest life of Man.

Here the poem, as a poem, has its true close : the two verses added are, like too many of the author's endings, unnecessary, and worse. The "tag" given to the Venusberg legend is a strong instance ; but we ought to add, that we have not seen the recently published "Selections," and some of these may have been set right by the author subsequently. The poems we have quoted, with one or two of the "Pictures in Verse," are the best things known to us of Lord Houghton.

The remarkable point is, that there is so little from which to make a selection, and that in reading all the writings of this author, we get the same vague sense of "plentiful lack." What is it that lies at the root of this ? Reticence is not the word ; nor weakness, nor poverty of invention or expression. But there seems to be everywhere a something which points to a want of intellectual enterprise on the part of the producing mind. There is a singularly generous power of Admiration, (I begin the word with a capital, because I use it in the Wordsworthian sense it carries in a certain well-known line) a sweet, spontaneous meditateness ; and a catholicity of moral judgment which sometimes seems almost to verge on indifferentism—though no dictum could be quoted to prove that, and many, many dicta may be said to prove the contrary. Yet in spite of the keynote of faith that is heard in the poem which I have last quoted—for the express purpose of leading up to this comment, and in spite of many other indications—we half suspect that this want of intellectual enterprise is somehow affiliated to a kind of latent pessimism. It is not the burden of any given melody, but it seems to hover around you in the echoes of the voice. Keats said with startling pregnancy of meaning, "*I would reject a Petrarchal coronation because of my dying day, and because women have cancers.*" Lord Houghton being yet among us, it would be indecorous to attempt an analysis of his character, in connection with his poetry ; but it does suggest itself, that this Keatsian kind of pessimism (I know the word is not exact) is at the root of that want of intellectual enterprise which strikes one in reading his books. In his very style there is no enterprise. The "Life of Keats" contains some passages of much beauty, but the writing never mounts ; you never know the difference between the crest and the trough of the wave. Some readers will, perhaps, be in haste to affirm that the author has not thought much, and therefore has no



thing to say that he need *care* to say. I cannot agree with this. There are abundant negative traces of minute and continuous meditation on the greatest problems ; but only a few of the results come to the surface in positive shape and colour ; and I cannot help fancying I hear everywhere the refrain, "because of my dying day, and because women have cancers." Supposing this to be true, it is still necessary to add that the refrain is heard in that kind of undertone which primarily suggests a want of "self-sufficiency," and which is never wrung from vulgar natures, whose very correctness is part of their vulgarity. But the kind of *cultus* to which the writings of Lord Houghton introduce you seems to want something, and, in that something, everything. No, not everything. But nothing shall tempt me to go farther in this direction ; and I particularly desire to omit that reference to Mæcenas which is usual when his lordship's name is mentioned,—and very usual indeed with those who cannot spell the word.

HENRY HOLBEACH.

## MAZZINI.

(Born at Genoa, 1808 ; died at Pisa, March 10th, 1872.)

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With face and hands of marble white,  
In deep black draped and shod with red,  
A Spirit stood o'er Rome by night,  
And spoke no word but hung the head ;  
And he had eyes of lurid light,  
And he was of an angel's height,  
And walk'd with angel's tread  
Those azure fields, while in his sight  
Rome gleam'd from its black bed.

The night's innumerable eyes  
Were closing in the chilly peep  
Of dawn unrisen, and the skies  
Had darkened to that death-like sleep  
Between two lives—the night that dies,  
And the cold day that doth arise  
Out of the darkened deep.  
Below, the mighty City lies,  
With river, dome, and steep.

With such a gaze as once of old  
O'er the wild voids of Hell he threw,  
The Spirit walked with footprint cold  
The pathless prairie heavenly blue.  
Like meadow flowers most manifold,  
The stars swung cups of green and gold,  
And gleam'd thro' silvern dew ;  
Beneath, a throbbing church-bell toll'd,  
And a cock faintly crew.

But hark ! what tumult from below  
Breaks, as dull thunder from a cloud—  
The vapours part, dim light doth grow,  
Beneath that Spirit spirits crowd,

Sad angels, dim as leaves that blow  
 Around the lily white as snow,  
 Cluster with foreheads bowed,  
 Upwafting on dark waves of woe,  
 A dead shape in its shroud !

## SPIRITS.

In our white arms of prayer,  
 From his bed we bring him—  
 Up thro' the silent air  
 We waft and wing him ;  
 Over the golden dome  
 A space we linger. . .  
 Flash the dead eyes on Rome,  
 Point the dead finger !

## SPIRIT.

Spirits of air, whom waft ye there,  
 With sound like waves on the sea-sand ?  
 Martyr or warrior do ye bear,  
 Or monarch of the land ?  
 And yet no crown is on his hair,  
 No sceptre in his hand.

## SPIRITS.

We bear a great king dead,  
 Tho' no man crown'd him ;  
 Upon no golden bed  
 We spirits found him ;  
 In no red raiment clad,  
 No proud state keeping ;  
 Homeless, and poor, and sad,  
 We found him sleeping.

## SPIRIT.

Sad spirits, do ye recognise  
 To whom ye speak this night ?

## SPIRITS.

We know thee, Dante, by thine eyes  
 Still lurid with strange light.

## SPIRIT OF DANTE.

Bring near your burthen—let me see  
 This face so still and dark !

## SPIRITS.

We bring our burthen up to thee,  
We hush ourselves and mark.

## SPIRIT OF DANTE.

Nearer—still nearer—the dead face uncover !  
Yea, let me gaze, again and yet again.  
Ah, soft ripe lips—the man hath been a lover ;  
Ah, woeful eyes—the man hath loved in pain !

There is no line of sin upon his features,  
No appetite to blight and to undo ;  
And yet his cold last smile is like a creature's  
Who might have wanton'd, had he been less true.

All here is love—the royal brow doth borrow  
Love from the eyes—that steal it from the lips.  
The man hath loved, and love to such means sorrow,  
For he was stainless to the finger tips.

Yea, he was royal, and loved in royal fashion,  
Wasted with some white thought, his life went past ;  
Say, on what creature did he spend his passion,  
And wherefore was it vestal till the last ?

## SPIRITS.

Look on the darkling land  
That lies below thee ;  
We point with his dead hand,  
That it may show thee—  
Italy ! Italy !  
Cast down he found her :  
He loved her, set her free—  
He robed and crown'd her !  
All gifts that love can give,  
He hourly brought her.  
He died that she might live—  
He tried and taught her ;  
He wasted his great brain  
Like the fire on an altar.  
Struck down, he rose again,  
Too strong to falter ;  
He built his love a home—  
Did hither bring her,

Queen of the golden dome  
 O'er which we linger. . .  
 Flash the dead eyes on Rome,  
 Point the dead finger !

## SPIRIT OF DANTE.

O Italy ! and this man was thy lover !  
 The last—the best—the truest thou hast slain !  
 Cover thy face—thy head with ashes cover :  
 Well might I deem that he had loved in pain !

I know thy strange insufferable beauty ;  
 Thy passionate eyes that yearn thro' waving hair !  
 I know thee, Magdalen ! slow to learn thy duty,  
 Quick to forgive thy wrongs, but ever fair.

Thy look has struck like fire thro' generations  
 Well weary of thy beauty and thy glee ;  
 No man hath kiss'd thee, wanderer among nations,  
 But he hath been a wanderer like thee.

The curse of beauty hath been laid upon thee ;  
 Thy hair too glorious and thy lips too red !  
 Many have sought thee, and no man hath won thee,  
 But on their souls thy soul hath thriven and fed.

Love, verily, thou hast taken but not given :  
 Thy beauty hath been cold moonlight on a sea.  
 Yet there thou sittest, crown'd in sight of Heaven,  
 Smiling thou sittest, somewhat false—but free !

## SPIRITS.

She gave no crown of gold,  
 No rose-red favour.  
 She pass'd on bright and cold  
 To the home he gave her.  
 He sat by the sea afar—  
 But she look'd not thither ;  
 She smiled to the evening star,  
 And his soul was with her.  
 For all the gifts he gave,  
 No man can number,  
 She hath not even a grave  
 Where he may slumber.  
 Queen of the golden dome,  
 O'er which we linger,

Yonder she sits at home,  
 And his dust we bring her. .  
 Flash the dead eyes on Rome,  
 Point the dead finger !

## SPIRIT OF DANTE.

Long, long ago, the dreadful path I wandered,  
 And saw the flaming and the frozen zone ;  
 Sad centuries on the sight my soul hath ponder'd,  
 Walking the silence of these paths, alone.

I see the bright sky spotted like a leopard ;  
 I see the dark earth like a burthen'd ox ;  
 I see the shut pavilion of the Shepherd,  
 Without, the wailing wolves, the bleeding flocks.

The soul of man is black with sin as ever,  
 All lands look vile ; Death hath a thousand lives ;  
 All things are changed, but Evil changes never ;  
 A thousand Kings are slain, but Satan thrives.

Afar away the ruby Gate is gleaming ;  
 Hell was, Hell is—as deep as man's despair.  
 Tell me, O Rome, o'er thine own beauty dreaming,  
 What was the vilest sin I look'd on there ?

Mark well ! Ingratitude. That name men give it.  
 It hath an awfuller name in yonder sky.  
 Touch thou this sin,—no scent of musk or civet  
 Shall sweeten thee to those who pass thee by.

Though thou be fairer than a flowering date-tree,  
 Though thou be clad in silks and precious stones,  
 Foulness shall cling to thee and penetrate thee,  
 And mar thee to the marrow of thy bones.

## SPIRITS.

What shall the lover wear,  
 Black or white raiment ?  
 What shall the woman fair  
 Give him for payment ?  
 Vestal within his breast  
 Burnt the bright splendour ;  
 Patient he sinks to rest,  
 Patient and tender.

Faithful to life and death—  
 (Watch, is she sleeping?)  
 True to the latest breath  
 (Hark! is she weeping?).  
 Italy! Italy!  
 This was thy lover;  
 Raise thy cold eyes and see,  
 Here while we hover.  
 What is that glittering  
 In thy lap holden?  
 What is that shining thing,  
 Purple and golden?  
 Why on the earthly crown  
 Vacantly gleaming,  
 With thy cold eyes cast down,  
 Smilest thou dreaming?  
 Over the golden dome  
 Hover and linger!—  
 Flash the dead eyes on Rome,  
 Point the dead finger!

## SPIRIT OF DANTE.

O fool! thou find'st the substance in the symbol,  
 Fixing thine amorous eyes on thine own crown;  
 A bauble paltrier than a huswife's thimble  
 Allures thee, and thou canst not cast it down!

Yea, Italy! thou art a very woman,  
 And mortal men have loved thee over-much;  
 Thou hast an angel's eyes, but thou art human,  
 And there is treachery in thy silken touch.

Are thine eyes tearless? Hath thy soul forgotten?  
 Know'st thou no King but him who owns a throne?  
 Then, eat and die—for all thy life is rotten,  
 And where a heart once beat there slips a stone.

Earth hath a hundred kings who take their payment,  
 A hundred thrones arise in the bright sun;  
 Earth hath a hundred kings in glorious raiment,  
 How many kings like this? Perchance, not one.

O royal eyes! O royal locks all hoary,  
 Smooth'd from the kingly temples marbly cold!  
 O man! O lover! thine is greater glory—  
 In God's own list of kings thy name is scroll'd.



Thy kingdom was of hungry aspirations—  
 Thy people starved and thou didst find them food ;  
 Over the blacken'd gold-mines of the nations  
 Still didst thou walk, in raiment meek and good.

None knew thy regal state but the anointed—  
 Few kissed thy hand and trembled at thine eyes ;  
 Yet from the Silence to a throne appointed  
 Thou cam'st, as surely as a star doth rise.

Not stainless wholly was thy rule, O brother !  
 These lines on thy proud mouth are touched with wrong ;  
 Erring like all who come of the sad Mother,  
 Thou to thy kingdom camest, and made it strong.

Take him and lay him at God's feet. I fear not  
 But God will bid him live in his due place ;  
 Yet haply sleep were best, that he may hear not  
 How little she he loved doth miss his face.

For be he flesh or spirit, man or vision,  
 Be he cast down to Hell or raised above,  
 On Earth, in Hell, or in the fields Elysian,  
 What he loved once, this man will ever love.

And wheresoever his new feet shall wander,  
 New dreams of love will in his soul be planned ;  
 His yearning eyes will earthward turn and ponder  
 The lineaments of one beloved land !

## SPIRITS.

A thousand Kings, each on his throne,  
 Sat robed and crown'd beneath the blue—  
 But one Republican alone  
 Was all the sad earth knew.

A thousand men since Time began  
 Have struck, and striven, and overcast ;  
 But only one Republican  
 Was faithful till the last.

Legions of Kings beneath the skies  
 Have died like locusts on the sod ;  
 But one Republican doth rise  
 King in the sight of God.

## SPIRIT OF DANTE.

Bring him yet nearer, let me stoop to kiss him ;  
 Worn are his cheeks, with having loved so much.  
 See ! the dawn breaks, the morning will not miss him,  
 But he will wake, a spirit, at God's touch.

Cold is his brow as ice, but he will waken !  
 I know his place, and thither must he go !  
 Into the company of Kings uptaken,  
 Who walk in peace on an eternal snow !

## SPIRITS.

In our white arms of prayer  
 From his bed we bring him ;  
 Up thro' the heavenly air  
 We waft and wing him.  
 Pillow'd on bosoms bright,  
 Fann'd by soft pinions,  
 Bear him in death-gear white  
 To God's dominions.  
 Now while day breaks beneath,  
 Coldly and stilly,  
 Set on his brow a wreath,  
 In his hand a lily :  
 Sceptred ev'n so and crown'd,  
 Let him be taken,  
 Then, at the Voice's sound,  
 Smiling and looking round,  
 Royally waken !

B.

## CRITICISM AS ONE OF THE FINE ARTS.

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AMONG the many things which modern ingenuity has tried to manipulate into a science must be classed what is usually called Criticism ; but, for my own part, I am inclined to think that Criticism means to belong to the Fine Arts, and to elude the scientific arrangement altogether.

There was a time, of course, when books, pictures, and music were judged by a certain set of fixed rules, each incontestable as the law of gravitation ; when contemporary persons could appraise the value of an æsthetic article as easily as a grocer finds out the weight of a pound of sugar ; when, in fact, critics knew their business thoroughly, being in the secret of the manufacture. Sometimes the critical scales were entrusted to one man, say to Voltaire, or John Dryden, or Addison. Again, public opinion was guided by a kind of joint stock company, like Pope, Swift, & Co., or Gifford & Co., or Jeffrey, Brougham, & Co. In all cases alike judgment was *infallible* ; there was no appeal. And the laws on which sentence was founded were, curiously enough, considered so unimpeachable, that one no more thought of questioning them than believers think of questioning the divine laws of Confucius, or the miracles of Mahomet, or the revelations of the Apocalypse. Moreover, these laws had all the weight of mystery. No one had ever read the golden book where they were enshrined. They were written in an unknown tongue ; the high-priest of criticism sat on the tripod, and interpreted. In this way, things amazing and awful came to pass. At one time it was decreed here in England that Abraham Cowley was a mighty genius ; and at another it was settled, there in France, that Shakspeare was a rude unsavoury monster. The Oracle spake, and Klopstock was crowned. The public listened and approved. No unordained person dared to interfere in so profound a matter. The little murmur of protest that rose when impostors like Keats were punished, soon died away in the loud roar greeting the coronation of divinities like Mr. Sotheby. Criticism, in fact, was a semi-religious rite performed by a priesthood, guided partly by a set of divine rules, partly by a kind of corybantic inspiration.

Recent scepticism has tried to demolish much—the Pentateuch and some of the miracles, for example ; but it has never yet demolished the brazen idols of Criticism. The public press has advanced a great deal, freeing men's minds and widening their knowledge ; but, strange to say, it has not yet advanced to the point of refusing to shelter

that worst class of priestcraft, which pronounces anonymous judgments. It is quite true, however, that now-a-days it does not much matter, since critics are thoroughly disorganised, and each fellow, on a tripod of his own, delivers judgment to a special circle; so that publishing a book or showing a picture is simply another sort of "running the gauntlet." But it is surely high time, in this questioning age, to ask on what grounds this critical priesthood still exists at all; why it presumes to give judgment, often with such reckless disregard of consequences; what use it is to any soul under the sun; and how, having once proved it as thorough a humbug as the Delphic oracle itself, we are to get rid of it in the speediest possible manner?

To begin with, what is Criticism?

Strictly speaking, of course, it is the application of certain tests, by which we may ascertain the value of specific articles, just as we find out the quality of gold. These tests, applied to literature and art, have produced most astounding results, without really enlightening mankind at all. It was all very well when the work was cut and dried. At one time, for example, Criticism did almost all her work by a cabalistic yard-measure called the "Unities." Nothing could be easier. Whenever an epic poem or a tragedy was brought up for judgment, out came the yard-measure, and the matter was decided in a moment. The thing either did or did not conform to the Unities, and was praised or damned accordingly; and in those days, we may remark *en passant*, Shakspeare was nowhere. Latterly, however, such tests as this have been abandoned in despair. It is recognised as a privilege of genius to break all set rules, and so ride triumphant over them. There is no absolute axiom of criticism which some great man may not falsify in practice to-morrow. Here again, therefore, we ask with some asperity, what is Criticism?

No science certainly. No list of set rules to be applied by a priesthood. No sum as easy to manage as the multiplication table. What then?

Criticism, now-a-days, simply means (it is doubtful whether at any time it has meant much more) the *impression* produced on certain minds by certain products. If Jones paints a picture, and it is noticed unfavourably in the *Peckham Review*, the criticism does not come right up out from Delphi, but consists simply of so much "copy" in the handwriting of Robinson. If Brown composes a poem, and it is wildly eulogised in the *Stokeinpogis Chronicle*, let him first bethink himself, before he become too bumptious, that the eulogy in question is simply the result of an individual impression, say on the mind of Smith. In any of these cases it is quite clear that the value of the criticism depends on the amount of honesty and intelligence possessed by Robinson and Smith respectively. To get anything like a fair insight into the truth, we must take care to ascertain at least a few preliminaries:

1. How old the critic is, and what is the bent of his intellect?
2. What are his favourite authors? What is his chief study?
3. Has he ever written or painted himself, and, if so, is he at all *soured*?
4. Is he personally acquainted with the author or painter criticised? and if so, are his relations with him friendly, or the reverse?
5. Is he usually honest in the expression of his opinions? &c. &c.

These seem unlimited questions, but, in point of fact, they are virtually answered in all criticism that has any weight. They are least answered, of course, in *anonymous* criticism; but, even then, they are partially settled to the public satisfaction. One may calculate to a nicety, for example, what effect such and such a new work will produce on the editor of the *Times*, or of the *Spectator*, or of the *Saturday Review*. A work of high and daring originality, unpopular in form, will be utterly ignored by the leading journal, patronized (if it contain no offence to the Broad Church) in the *Spectator*, and gibed and grinned at in the *Saturday Review*. Behind and beyond the natural style and temper of these professional critics, there lie of course the mysterious workings of private liking and prejudice. Now and then, when we see the unpopular tone taken in the *Times*, we know what enormous secret influence must have been used to get that tone taken. There is no one of these journals, there is no one of the men who write these journals, quite free of undue influence in some direction or other; conscious or unconscious—it is there. There is, in fact, no end to the questions we must definitely answer before we ascertain the value of any published opinion. It is in all cases the record of an impression only; but how has that impression been taken? How rare it is to find a man in whose capability of *receiving* an honest influence we can place full reliance! It is not dishonesty we have to fear, but certain unconscious weaknesses. Even in the cases of such men as Mr. Mill, or Mr. Herbert Spencer, or Sainte-Beuve, or M. Taine, we must have our doubts. We almost trust them, but now and then we pause. And then, when the critical moment comes, what is their "impression" worth? Personally, much; scientifically, not a rap!

It is great fun—fun given to poor mortality, alas! too seldom—to see the advent of some outrageous Genius, some

Monstr'-inform'-ingens-horrendus  
Demoniac-seraphic

prodigy of the Euphocion order, starting up to the horror of criticism, and carrying all the masses before him by simple charm. Wonderful is that gift of producing on thousands of people precisely the same set of favourable impressions; wonderful is that gift, whether possessed by a Dickens, a Tennyson, or a Tupper. Fortunately the great

mass of people are their own "tasters," judging for themselves at first hand, and they won't be guided by the literary priests, however so wise; and it is simply delicious to observe how reputations grow, in spite of all the priesthood do to tramp them down. Let no man despair merely because the few who write abuse him. The abuse simply means that he is not wanted by Smith, Brown, and Jones; while all the time he is being eagerly waited for by all the legions of the Robinsons, to whom every word he drops is a revelation. Longfellow has ceased to be a favourite with reviewers, but he has his compensations. George Eliot is praised by every reviewer in the country, but the public knows, for all that, that she has never fulfilled her original promise. Dickens was abused by genteel journals, but what cared he?

Every author or artist, in fact, is a gauge to tell how many people there are in the world of about his own ratio of intelligence—minus the creative faculty. There are one hundred thousand Tupperts. There are (it is seriously calculated) one hundred Stuart Mills and half-a-dozen Herbert Spencers. In art, the Faeds and Friths are innumerable; the Millais numerous; and the Poynters infinitesimal. For many years, Browning paid the public large sums, as it were, for the privilege of publishing poems; only there was no article in the agreement that the poems in question were to be *read*; and now, the public has turned the tables, and is paying all the money back for the privilege of reading those very poems. The Mutual Admiration School of Poetry is scarcely read out of London, and produces no impression whatever on the public; the fact being that sensualists and spoonneys are not so common as some critics persist in telling us. Luckily, we say, criticism can only do mischief up to a certain point, and cannot do that mischief long. It may delay a reputation, but it cannot kill it. The public, in the long run, will have its own way, and choose its own favourite, and will choose according to the direct impression made by the favourite in question.

But what a boon it would be to the public if the gentlemen who "do" criticism, instead of assuming the priestly robe and sitting veiled on a tripod, were simply and fearlessly to tell us how certain works have affected them, what they like and dislike in them, how they seem to stand in relation to other literature. What time this would save! What lying it would avoid! To speak with authority is "parlous" indeed. Who gains anything when Anonymous writes that Browning's last poem is sheer balderdash, or that Simeon Solomon's last picture is divinely original? *Who* says so? That is what we want to get at. If it be Smith, let Smith come forward and sign his name. Of course, much in criticism is self-convincing, quite apart from the writer's identity; and the best and most convincing criticism of all, in the case of a book, is free and ungarbled *extract* from the work under notice: *extract* can seldom be unfair. But in

how many cases should we be on our guard if we knew what critic was administering judgment. Take an instance. Mr. Grote devotes a lifetime to the study of Plato, and at last produces a great work on the subject. This work, being sent to the *Megatherium* for review, is handed over to Tomkins, who is fresh from the university, where, so far from making any mark, he was considered a dull fellow, and has drifted into the most irresponsible of all businesses, that of anonymous reviewing.

#### TOMKINS'S QUALIFICATIONS.

1. He is 25 years of age, and with little experience either of men or books.
2. He was crammed for his degree, and knows little of Greek beyond the alphabet.
3. He has quick intelligence, great power of hiding his ignorance, and little honesty.
4. He is mentally incapable of conceiving a Platonic proposition, &c.

Here, it will be admitted, we should know what to think of Tomkins's criticism on Grote, if he candidly prefixed to it the above list of qualifications; yet ten to one Tomkins, under his anonymous guise, manages so cleverly to conceal his ignorance that we feel perfectly satisfied when he concludes: "Passing over certain errors and repetitions pardonable in a work of such magnitude, as well as the pedantic mode of spelling some words more familiar to us in their Latinized shape, we may record our opinion that this work has given us real pleasure,—an opinion in which, we are sure, every scholar will join. We have already expressed our disapproval of certain passages, and have indicated where they need revision; these revisions made, the work will stand as a monument of English scholarship and a complete manual of the subject."

Take another instance. A man of genius, to whom this generation does scant justice, Mr. William Gilbert, publishes a story, in which the real life of the lower classes in our country is pictured for us with a fidelity which would be terrible, if it were not illuminated by the most subtle and delicate humour. This story goes to the *Diletante Gazette*, and in course of time is handed over to Chesterfield Junior, Esq., of the Inner Temple.

#### CHESTERFIELD JUNIOR'S QUALIFICATIONS FOR "CRITICISING" "DE PROFUNDIS."\*

1. He is 30 years of age, a literary man about town, and his tastes are elegant.

\* *De Profundis: a Tale of the Social Deposits.* By William Gilbert. (Strahan and Co.)



2. His notion of the working man is that he is a "rough;" and his notion of life generally is that it is a series of dinings-out, unpleasantly varied by sullen requisitions on the part of the lower classes for "goods received."

3. He is utterly destitute of beneficence; he has not even a dramatic perception of what beneficence is.

4. His favourite author is Thackeray; but he enjoys the "fun" of Dickens, &c.

5. He is utterly and hopelessly unconscious of the limited nature of his own literary vision.

Chesterfield Junior's criticism on the marvellous tale of common life would probably amount to this:—"We have here a study, in the manner of Defoe, of one of the least interesting forms of life generated by our over-crowded cities. No one can doubt the cleverness of the hard literal drawing; but to us it is simply unpleasant. It is a photograph, not a picture. It altogether lacks beauty, and has not one flash of the illuminating humour which distinguishes Dickens's work in the same direction." In this case, be it noted, every word is the record of a genuine impression on a mind to whose sympathies the object does not appeal. Just suppose that, in addition to the natural antipathy, Chesterfield Junior had the least bit of *personal* animosity to his author, and he would hardly plead guilty to conscious injustice if he wrote in terms of entire condemnation: "Mr. Gilbert is a realist of the penny-a-liner type, without one gleam of genius, and his book is the most vulgar and unpleasant production we have read for a long time. Led by the natural gravitation of his mind to the study of what is low and common, and incapable of anything but a vulgarising treatment, he solicits our interests in the futures of a virtuous washerwoman, a drummer, and an irreclaimable thief. Trash like this is simply intolerable to any person of refined tastes." Poor Chesterfield Junior! He means no harm. He is only a sheep with a silk ribbon on his neck, bleating his mutton-like defiance. A few people are deceived, and say to themselves, "This Mr. Gilbert must be a very unpleasant writer!" We, who know better, only smile, saying, "Chesterfield Junior has put his poor little foot into it again, as is again and again the custom of creatures without eyes."

On the other hand, let the same work fall into the hands of Addison Redivivus, whose qualifications are great beneficence, vast experience of the lower classes, a natural repugnance to all false sentiment and fine writing, and that sort of intelligence which gives as well as takes illumination; and we shall speedily hear, perhaps, that "*De Profundis*" is, for sheer perfection in the rarest of all styles, a work with scarcely a peer, possessing both truth and beauty, bearing on every page the sign of a masterly understanding and of the finest intellectual humour, and leaving on the competent reader's mind an impression

in the highest sense imaginative and poetical. Who would be right—Chesterfield Junior or Addison Redivivus?

Criticism, we repeat, is no science. Neither Chesterfield nor Addison can settle the matter by any fixed rule. They merely chronicle their impression *pro* or *contra*, and the value of the impression depends on our knowledge of the person impressed. Well, if criticism is no science, what is it? It seems to me that criticism, as the representation of the effect particular works have on particular individuals, is rapidly securing its place as one of the Fine Arts, and that its value is in exact proportion to the amount of artistic *self-portraiture* attained by the critic.

We have half-a-dozen tolerable critics in England, but we have none nearly equal as an artist to the person whom I shall use to illustrate my proposition. Now that Sainte-Beuve is gone, the finest living specimen is M. Taine, whose works are winning appreciation here as well as in France. M. Taine has great intelligence, culture, literary experience. His faculty of composition may be described as almost creative. Wherein, then, does this faculty consist? It consists, I am sure, in the man's unequalled power of representing his own qualifications; of illustrating to us, by a thousand delicate lights and shades, the quality of his own mind and its limitations; and of revealing to us, as frequently as possible, the nature of his education and its effect on his tastes. Sooner or later, he enables us to become on intimate terms with him. He conceals little or nothing. He lays bare the most secret sources of his sympathies and his antipathies. He invariably discards the "editorial" tone. And when once we know him thoroughly, nothing can be more delightful than his way of playing with his theme. We know almost by instinct where he will be right and where he may be wrong. His work belongs to the Fine Arts, and at times approaches masterly portrayal.

"The following," M. Taine says in effect, "are my qualifications:—

"1. I am not too young for self-restraint, nor too old for sympathy, and I have had an excellent education.

"2. I am a Frenchman, educated under the Empire, and (more or less unconsciously) 'æstheticised.'

"3. I have the French hatred of 'institutions,' and the French deficiency in the religious faculty.

"4. My passion for *symmetry* may lead you to believe me a formal person; but I am in reality a loose thinker, dexterously manœuvring impressions under the guise of a finished style.

"5. Form, as form, almost always fascinates me, but I *try* most to sympathise where the subject is most shapeless.

"6. I am thoroughly conscious of my limitations, and seldom try to conceal them.

"7. In spite of my seeming power of surveying large surfaces (the result of my instinct of symmetrical arrangement), my faculty is

microscopic, and examines every work of art inch by inch, phrase by phrase, afterwards piecing the criticism together into the form of a verdict on the whole work."

Much more might be added; but the point is, that M. Taine, being a thorough artist, tells us all the above, directly or indirectly, and makes us alive to it at every step. He never allows us for a moment to lose sight of himself; and he is at his best when he is least impersonal, and most candid in portraying his emotions.

How delicious it is, for example, to find a critic showing his own intellectual physiognomy in this way, when beginning to criticise a great English philosopher:—

"When at Oxford some years ago, during the meeting of the British Association, I met, amongst the few students still in residence, a young Englishman, a man of intelligence, with whom I became intimate. He took me in the evening to the New Museum, well filled with specimens. Here short lectures were delivered, new models of machinery were set to work; ladies were present and took an interest in the experiments; on the last day, full of enthusiasm, *God save the Queen* was sung. I admired this zeal, this solidity of mind, this organisation of science, these voluntary subscriptions, this aptitude for association and for labour, this great machine pushed on by so many arms, and so well fitted to accumulate, criticise, and classify facts. But yet, in this abundance, there was a void; when I read the Transactions, I thought I was present at a congress of heads of manufactories. All these learned men verified details and exchanged recipes. It was as though I listened to foremen, busy in communicating their processes for tanning leather or dyeing cotton: general ideas were wanting. I used to regret this to my friend; and in the evenings, by his lamp, amidst that great silence in which the university town lay wrapped, we both tried to discover its reasons."

"One day I said to him: You lack philosophy—I mean, what the Germans call metaphysics. You have learned men, but you have no thinkers. Your God impedes you. He is the Supreme Cause, and you dare not reason on causes, out of respect for Him. He is the most important personage in England, and I see clearly that he merits his position; for he forms part of your constitution, he is the guardian of your morality, he judges in final appeal on all questions whatsoever, he replaces with advantage the prefects and gendarmes with whom the nations on the Continent are still encumbered. Yet this high rank has the inconvenience of all official positions; it produces a cant, prejudices, intolerance, and courtiers. Here, close by us, is poor Mr. Max Müller, who, in order to acclimatise the study of Sanscrit, was compelled to discover in the Vedas the worship of a moral God, that is to say, the religion of Paley and Addison. Some time ago, in London, I read a proclamation of the Queen, forbidding people to play cards, even in their own houses, on Sundays. It seems that, if I were robbed, I could not bring my thief to justice without taking a preliminary religious oath; for the judge has been known to send a complainant away who refused to take the oath, deny him justice, and insult him into the bargain. Every year, when we read the Queen's speech in your papers, we find there the compulsory mention of Divine Providence, which comes in mechanically, like the apostrophe to the immortal gods on the fourth page of a rhetorical declamation; and you remember that once, the pious phrase having been omitted, a second communication was made to Parliament for the express purpose of supplying it. All these cavillings and

pedantry indicate to my mind a celestial monarchy; naturally, it resembles all others; I mean that it relies more willingly on tradition and custom than on examination and reason. A monarchy never invited men to verify its credentials."—*Taine's History of English Literature*, trans. by Henry Van Lann, vol. ii., pp. 478—479 (*Essay on John Stuart Mill*).

Even if the above did not occur at the end of two large volumes, full of self-portraiture more or less indirect, it would reveal to us, as by a sun-picture, the man with whom we have to deal. Herein lies the delightful Art of it. We certainly do get some formal ideas in the end about Mr. Mill, but our real interest for the time being is in M. Taine. How subtle he is! how thoroughly French! How just and kind he is in other places to Tennyson and Thackeray: but how much more he loves De Musset and Balsac! He becomes our personal friend, and every word he utters has weight. His egotism is charming; we could hear him talk for hours.

In England here, critics for the most part assume the editorial tone, and are proportionally uninteresting. To the long list of critics who write without edification, either because they decline self-revelation or are unpleasant when revealed, may be added, in modern times, the names of Mr. Lewes, late editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, and the Duke of Argyll. These gentlemen sign their articles, but utterly fail to attract us, they are so thoroughly, so transparently, editorial. Critics of the higher class, on the other hand, may be found in Mr. Arthur Helps, Mr. Matthew Arnold, and (with a strong editorial leaven) in Mr. R. H. Hutton, who has recently published two volumes of essays. Mr. Arnold may or may not be an interesting being, but he never for a moment represents himself as what he is not. We know him as thoroughly as if we had been to school with him. We do not get angry with what he says, so much as with his insufferable manner of saying it. Mr. Helps is, once and for ever, the optimist man of the world. Mr. R. H. Hutton shows us, as in a mirror, his deep-seated prejudice, his quick sympathy with ideas as distinguished from literary clothing, and his genial love of microscopic *délicatesse*. We know at once that this last critic will pass Hugo by, and adore Tennyson; that he will find great pleasure in the poetry of Mr. Keble; and that his sympathy with revolt will take no more violent form than a predilection for the critical poems of Mr. Arnold!

And just in so far as they tell us so much, just in so far as they suffer us to see their prejudices and their limitations, are these gentlemen good critics—critics rapidly advancing their profession to a place among the Fine Arts. Let them come!—the more the merrier! We would sooner take the opinion of Mr. Hutton, or Mr. Helps, or Mr. Arnold, or even Mr. Sala,—any of these gentlemen individually,—than that of any unknown oracle, from the *Times* downwards.

Besides, unknown oracles can be bought ; but to buy clever men is not so easy. It is on these very grounds that the public should only smile good-humouredly when Brown, Robinson, and Co. take to puffing each other. We have lately had the spectacle of a group of drawing-room poets undertaking to blow the trumpet for each other till the world should ring again. And why not ? There was no "editorial" deception. The thing was not criticism, but it was Fine Art, and everybody enjoyed the self-revelation of Mr. Swinburne as a man totally without perception of the meaning of words and the right measure of flattery, and the self-revelation of Mr. Swinburne's friends as gentlemen gone mad with secret emotion-hatching. The knowledge so acquired is invaluable. We can hardly, in fact, grumble at any nonsense if it be signed, and if the signer shows us the sort of man he is.

In many cases, the anonymous is a mere cloak, and everybody knows whom it conceals. The public bowed before the judgment of Jeffrey and Brougham, not that of the *Edinburgh Review* ; before the judgment of Gifford and Southey, not that of the *Quarterly Review*. Nowadays, nevertheless, the anonymous pen has multiplied itself so prodigiously, that the air rings with flats and acclaims, and Heaven knows who is uttering them ! It is wonderful how Genius gets along, and escapes being put down ; wonderful how fairly the oracles speak, in spite of their irresponsibility. Still, the only criticism worth a rap belongs to the Fine Artist, and the only critic who really carries us away is he whose personality we entirely respect.

There seems no end to the extension of so-called criticism as a creative form of composition (as valuable in its way as lyrical poetry or autobiography), wherein we have the representation of certain known products on certain competent or incompetent natures. The man who criticises may attract us by the tints of his own individuality, and the play of his own soul, as successfully as the man who sings or the man who paints. His work is merely the final record of an impression which, before reaching him, has passed through the colouring matter of the poet's or painter's mind. To conclude, then, scientific criticism is fudge, as sheer fudge as scientific poetry, as scientific painting ; but criticism does belong to the Fine Arts, and for that reason its future prospects are positively unlimited.

WALTER HUTCHESON.

## SERAPHINA SNOWE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ST. ABE AND HIS SEVEN WIVES."

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### I.

#### HER PORTRAIT.

THE medium Seraphina Snowe  
Has come to town with her Spirit-show :  
A lady whom many a humbug think,  
Raised in this land of the bobolink ;  
Has bothered philosophers many a day  
In the land of vapours over the way ;  
And back from England cometh she  
Blown like a feather across the sea.

A little lady with very white teeth,  
White high forehead, and underneath  
Eyes of strange forget-me-not blue  
Wash'd more pale by a dreamy dew ;  
Lips very red, and ever apart,  
Full of the pants of a passionate heart ;  
Yellow and silken is her hair,  
With a gleam of blood-red here and there ;  
As light, as bright, as a gleaming dove  
Is the little lady the spirits love !

Hold her hand up to the light !  
How transparent, how waxen white,  
Save where the pink blood glimmers thro'.  
Observe the slight little body, too—  
A mingling all tinted well  
Of "Ariel" and "Little Nell,"  
With a spice of "Puck !"

With the wise men round her,  
And the savants dying to confound her,  
She seems like some bright beautiful bird,  
Singing to snakes,—who think song absurd ;  
Or a wave, that breaks and sparkles and dances,  
While the dark rocks scowl, until each rock glances

With the dew it scatters ; or best, some hold,  
 One of those spiders whose threads of gold  
 Cross the woodland pathway, and (though so thin)  
 The light and the dew and the glory win,—  
 While close at hand, with watchful wits  
 The lithe and luminous lady sits,—  
 With her body all beauty, her home all gay,  
 And her two eyes waiting for common prey.

## II.

## SÉANCE.

Poor little lady, so soft, so white !  
 What ! doth she think in a net so slight  
 To catch enormous insects like *these*,  
 Or the critical wasps, or the busy bees ?  
 Buzz ! in the silent séance you mark  
 The wise blue-bottles hovering dark :  
 Doctor That and Professor This,  
 Each one finding the thing amiss,  
 Seeking to learn the trick of the show.  
 Poor little Seraphina Snowe !

Hush ! How brightly she doth brood  
 In the midst of us all, with the gentle blood  
 All flown to her heart, and her face all hoar.  
 Darken the room a little more !  
 Is that the wind on the pane, or the rain ? . . .  
 Something is stirring in my brain . . .  
 What is *that* ? . .

In the darkness of the room  
 Her face grows up and fills the gloom  
 Like a lily of light. I feel her eyes,  
 Tho' I cannot see them. My spirits rise  
 And shiver—my heart ticks like a clock.  
 O hush ! O hush ! was that a knock ?  
 Half a tap and half a creak,  
 Partly bubble and partly squeak,—  
 One—two—three !  
 The room seems rising, and still I see  
 The gleam of the face. Strange raptures rain  
 Thro' my blood, and my bone, and my bursting brain.  
 She draws me nearer to her place,  
 I seem to be coming face to face ;



She drinks my life—her soft lips shoot  
 Warmth to my spirit's uttermost root—  
 Her glittering soul is in mine—and hark !  
 The sounds continue in the dark—  
 One—two—three !

Break the charm ! On the company  
 Comes a scream like a spirit's in pain !—  
 Something sweet dies out of my brain ;  
 And as lights are brought, great, yellow, and bright,  
 There the medium sits so white,  
 Staring round with bewildered looks ;  
 And beneath her croucheth Doctor Snooks  
 With a grin on his lanthorn jaws ;—for he  
 Has gript her delicate lissome knee,  
 And holds the muscles as in a vice ;  
 And “ Lo ! ” he crieth, “ in a trice  
 I have stopt the raps ; 'tis a muscular-trick,  
 And nothing more.” Then, rising quick,  
 He addeth, seizing his hat, “ Good day !  
 Madam, I wish you a wiser way  
 Of gulling the public ! ” Out they go,  
 Reproachful, melancholy, slow ;  
 But still like a bird at bay sits she,  
 Half in a swoon,—so silently  
 Watching them all, as they flit by,  
 With her pale spectral eyes.

And I,  
 With eyes that burn and heart astir,  
 Would linger behind and speak to her ;  
 But she waves me hence with a little scream.  
 And out I follow in a dream,  
 A haunted man ; and when I meet  
 The chuckling Doctor in the street,  
 I pass him by with a bitter frown,  
 And my hot fist burns to knock him down.

### III.

#### THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PHILOSOPHY.

O eyes of pale forget-me-not blue,  
 Wash'd more pale by a dreamy dew,  
 O red red lips, O dainty tresses,  
 O heart the breath of the world distresses,

O little lady, do they divine  
 That they have *fathom'd* thee and thine?  
 Fools! let them fathom fire,—and beat  
 Light in a mortar; aye, and heat  
 Soul in a crucible! Let them try  
 To conquer the light, and the wind, and the sky!  
 Darkly the secret forces lurk,  
 We know them least where most they work;  
 And here they meet and mix in thee,  
 For a strange and mystic entity,  
 Making of thy pale soul, in sooth,  
 A life half trickery and half truth.

Well? O my philosophic friend,  
 Does Nature herself ne'er condescend  
 To cheats, and shams, and freaks, and tricks,  
 Or doth she rather affect to mix  
 Reason with revel? Are you certain  
 That all is truth behind the curtain  
 Of lovely things you bless and meet?  
 Doth the earth never sham, the sky never cheat?  
 And do we question and rebel  
 If the cheat is pleasant and plausible?  
 Do we growl at the rainbow in the air,  
 Or frown at the mirage here or there?  
 Nay, we take these things as they come, my friend,  
 And let them into our being blend!  
 Passive we yield to the sun and the light,  
 To the scent of the flowers, to the sense and the sight,  
 Feeling all changes with souls serene . . .  
 And so I take poor Seraphine!  
 Beautiful mingling, tinted well,  
 Of "Ariel" and of "Little Nell,"  
 With a spice of "Puck."

True; as you aver,

I never was a philosopher.  
 But I do not envy Dr. Snooks  
 His scientific tools and books,  
 And I cheerfully let the grim old boy  
 Dissect the humbug that I enjoy.

Names—more names? Let the lady be—  
 Fie upon your philosophy!  
 And so the tricky little bird  
 Is a "grass-widow" (is that the word?),

Or cast-off mistress, left to shame  
 By a New York rowdy of evil fame.  
 He thrash'd her, did he? Go on. What more?  
 Finish your story, and o'er and o'er,  
 Proving things beyond human guess,  
 Blacken the little adventuress.

Now you have done, and I have heard  
 Patiently every cruel word,  
 Listen to me; or rather, no!  
 Why should I argue with you so,  
 O wise Philosophy? Frown and go!  
 I turn to Seraphina Snowe!

## IV.

## MESMERIC FLASHES.

O eyes of pale forget-me-not blue,  
 Wash'd more pale with dreamy dew,  
 What faces wicked, what haunts unclean  
 Have ye not in your wanderings seen!  
 Poor little body, so frail and thin,  
 Bruised in the brutal embrace of sin!  
 Thin white hands where the blood doth run,  
 Like the light in a shell held up to the sun,  
 How often have ye lifted been  
 To ward away from hands obscene,  
 Not a wicked touch, but a ruffian blow!  
 God bless thee, Seraphina Snowe!  
 Found out, exposed, the jest of the day,  
 With thy spectral eyes on the world, at bay!  
 While the sense of the sun and the wind and the light  
 Surge thro' thee, and leave thee more wild and white,  
 And a mystic touch is in thy hair,  
 And a whisper of awe is everywhere,  
 And thou almost fearest in thy sin  
 The spirits thou half believest in!

Always imposing, little Elf,  
 And most on thy delicate, silken self!  
 Making the raps with thy cunning knee,  
 Smiling to hear them secretly,—  
 And all the while thy pulses beat,  
 Thou tremblest at thine own deceit,

Listening, yielding, till there comes  
Out of thy soul and out at thy thumbs  
A wave of emotion, a swift flame  
Blanching thy spiritual frame  
To more ivory whiteness—a wild dew  
Washing the spectral eyes more blue—  
The secret soul with its blinding light  
Confirming thee in thy lie's despite!

Would to God that thou and I  
Might put our hands together and fly  
To some far island lone and new,  
Where the sun is golden, the sea dark blue,  
Where the scented palm and the cocoa-tree  
Should make a bower for thee and me,  
And all should be wild, and bright, and keen,  
The flowers all colour, the leaves all sheen,  
The air and the warm earth all aglow  
With the life, the fever, the ebb-and-flow,  
With the spirit-waves that flowing free  
Foam up to a crest in souls like thee!

There, like the spider silvern and soft  
Spinning its thread of gold aloft,  
Thou shouldst sit among the leaves, and look  
Out at me from a golden nook;  
And draw me nearer with those dim eyes,  
And kindle thyself to pants and sighs,  
And I would crouch and gaze at thee  
Through life that would seem eternity;—  
While a wondrous spiritual light  
Flash'd through and through me so wild and bright,  
Till I faded away beneath thy hand,  
Through thy soul, to the Spirit Land!

## ROMANCE AND HUMOUR FROM THE BLUE BOOKS.

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### I.—LORD AND LADY DUNDONALD'S ELOPEMENT TO GRETNA.

WE often read and hear of the romance of real life, but we rarely find it satisfactory. The particular case may prove, or go to prove, that truth is stranger than fiction; but that, so far as it is just, carries with it only a remote value, and no one was ever yet persuaded by it into taking a newspaper or a blue-book for a novel or a poem. We feel that there is an equivocation somewhere. The romance of real life proves to be, after all, no romance. "Enoch Arden" may be founded on fact, and so may "Sylvia's Lovers;" but, when we read in our newspaper of an "Enoch Arden in real life" (only the other day, we saw a paragraph headed, "A Batch of Enoch Ardens"), we find we do not derive from the case the same kind of satisfaction that we get from the poem. "Sylvia's Lovers" may have had an original in fact, for Mrs. Gaskell to draw from; but though that original, if you had known it, might have arrested your own attention as it did Mrs. Gaskell's, it would never have given you the peculiar impression that her story produces.

One reason is that you are too close to the footlights; you can discern that the Rosalind is not as young as she ought to be for the part, and that Orlando is weak in the knees. Poetic unity is not maintained; and it is not our weakness, but our strength—not our love of illusion, but our love of truth—which compels us to desire that it should be, and to feel that, if that is wanting, something is wrong. A great deal more might be said upon that and other topics, and perhaps we may find occasion for saying it when other instances of "the romance of real life" come to be introduced. But one point demands to be noticed at once. There is no romance possible where the actors are mean, and the emotions of the story on a low level. Humble in estate the actors may be, but they must not be cads. The emotions may play around the commonest interests of the human heart, but they must not be in themselves poor and paltry. Nor must they even be in too close juxtaposition with what is both or either. Nothing could, to us at least, make romance out of the Tichborne story, for instance. The mean odour of what is proper to the cad is too strong for the sensibilities to which Romance appeals. Thus, we need something more than surprising incident. The human figures must be, or seem, worthy of the god who ties the

knot or who cuts it, and we must not have a thunderstorm presented to us as that which spoils the beer, or makes Mrs. Cook pull her apron over her eyes.

We have long been of opinion that the greater part of the *real* romance of actual life goes unnoticed. This implies no disregard of the genius of Mr. Charles Reade;—for Mr. Reade cannot have his eyes everywhere, and do everything. But we believe the best part of the poetry and humour which lurk in blue books, newspapers, and such places, gets overlooked. Nobody seems to find out the magic flower-garden, which is romance; while every one discovers the enormous gooseberry, in which there is no romance at all, though there may be much that is remarkable.

We are not now about to wander in any magic flower-garden, but only to say that there is some real romance to be found, in a book which is virtually a blue book, in connection with the greatest viking of modern times—Lord Dundonald, to whom they are, we believe, erecting a monument in Chili. The romance will speak for itself, and shall tell its own story. On other occasions, though we shall often go to blue-books real or virtual for our facts, we shall not tie ourselves down to them, and we beg the reader to accept the title as representative rather than logically all-inclusive.

In the year 1861, the case of the Dundonald peerage was before the House of Lords, and the old Dowager Lady Dundonald was examined as a witness upon the claim of her son. She was sixty-four years of age, and was treated with great indulgence. She was not tied down to the ordinary rules of evidence, but allowed to ramble and expatiate just as she pleased: and indeed it would probably have been found impossible to get much out of her if she had been strictly dealt with upon the ordinary principles for conducting an examination-in-chief. She shall tell the story of the courtship in her own words. There were apparently many obstacles to begin with:—

“He proposed to my aunt. He did not propose to me. He had once named the subject to me, and I refused all sorts of things of the kind, and at length he made the proposal to my aunt.”

Then she is asked the question, “He was in love with your ladyship, I suppose?”—

“The world said so. I suppose it was so. It was an unlucky marriage for him, poor man. Then there was another person who had a large property, and he thought that not marrying the lady that he was wished to marry (and certainly he was not wished to marry me), he should avoid by a secret marriage a painful position to himself and this fortune going away from him; and that by keeping my marriage a secret, it should never interfere with that arrangement of his uncle’s. That was given to me as the object, and I had no right, and I had no reason, to doubt the word of the most honourable man I have

ever known. I loved him. He had once named the subject to me and I had refused him. I refused all sorts of things of the kind, and at length he made the proposal to my aunt; dear me, men in love are very foolish."

"Lord Dundonald had been very ill, and his life had been despaired of, and they sent his servant, Richard Carter, to me, to tell me he was dying, and also Captain Nathaniel Cochrane came to say how very ill he was, and to ask if I would walk in front of the house in the square, that I might let him see me; which I did, and he was lifted up to the window of his bedroom, looking like a corpse. My heart was softened to see that great man, the hero of a hundred fights. I cannot bear to be sitting here to vindicate the honour of such a man. It is too much not to speak and tell my feelings; it would be impossible. He was a glorious man. He was incapable of deception such as is imputed to him by the world, I know. I dare not say by his son, but still it is his son. Such an imputation upon such a man! Such a god of a man!—a man who could have ruled the world upon the sea! That I, his wife, should sit here to vindicate the honour of such a man as that! O God have mercy upon me, and upon us! It is too much; I cannot stand it! That honoured name!—that name for ages and for ages, that has rung the world with his deeds!—the hero of a hundred fights! I have followed the fortunes of that great man. I have stood upon the battle-deck; I have seen the men fall; I have raised them. I have fired a gun to save the life of a man for the honour of my husband, and would do it again. He was a glory to the nation in which he was born, and there is not a member of the family of Lord Dundonald that need not be proud of belonging to such a man as he was."

In that lifting of the sick man up to the window, we can hardly help discerning a little of a lover's artifice, but we like the man none the less for it. He did not consciously aim at "startling effects:" but he could not help them. In reading Lady Dundonald's references to his "honour" and the like, we must, of course, bear in mind the well-known story of the stock-jobbing charges made against him, his trial and conviction before the fiery Ellenborough, and his subsequent acquittal before the greater tribunal of his country, followed as it was by a restoration to all his honours.

Lord Brougham may be pardoned for some things, but there was one for which some of us will never forgive him—his Act for abolishing Gretna Green marriages. It was a great shame; but Lady Dundonald appears to have been very much worried by the sequel of her elopement; and there is something truly and deeply comic in her feeling so puzzled to know why she should be married so many times.

When Dundonald persuades her to go off to Gretna Green with him she has a nice time of it, travelling all day and all night, with four horses, and all that. She says:—

"I was very worn, and we went rolling on; and I slept, and so did he. At one part of the road—I know it was not Gretna Green, but some little distance after Gretna Green—he said, 'Well, thank God we are all right;' he used to call me a sort of pet name of his own, and he said, 'It is all right, Mouse: we are all right now. Moxham, mind you get a comfortable room for Lady Cochrane at the Queensberry Arms. We shall soon be there,' and he said nothing more."



Hamlet advised his mother *not* to let the king call her "his mouse," but there was no reason why Lady Dundonald should object to the name.

"I did not know why it was all right. He said, 'Mouse, we are over the border.' He said, 'Here we are over the border, now, and nothing but God can separate us.' I think he said at the same time, 'You are mine now, and you are mine for ever;' and he snapped his fingers in that way, as Scotchmen do when they are pleased."

But *do* all Scotchmen "snap their fingers in that way" when they are pleased?

"When I arrived at the Queensberry Arms, he was very joyous; I suppose men in love are. He said, 'It is all right; it is all right,' and he seated himself at the table in the room; he sate himself down as any gentleman might, and he wrote away, and wrote something, and then he said, 'I want Dick;' he used to call his servant Dick."

"After the paper was signed, and the servants gone away, he began to dance the Sailor's Hornpipe, a very unusual thing for him, and he put up his hands in that sort of way, and said, 'Now you are mine, Mouse, mine for ever.' I said, 'I do not know, I have had no parson here, and no church. Is this the way you marry in Scotland?' 'Oh yes,' he said, 'you are mine, sure enough; you cannot get away;' and then he said, 'I have no time to spare; I have no time to lose, for I must be back on the 10th to my uncle's marriage; he is going to be married, and he will be married on the 11th, or the 12th, I have not a moment's time to lose, and therefore I must leave you as fast as I can. I have given all my instructions to Dick, and he will bring you back as soon as he can.' He kissed me; he did not go in my room, and he went off as he came. I never saw him again until the 12th or the 13th, when we met in Bryanston Street, Portman Square."

There are points here upon which no comment is necessary or permissible,—except such as gentle hearts will make for themselves. But there is unconscious humour in the lady's remark that it was "a very unusual thing" for Dundonald to dance the Sailor's Hornpipe. How often did he do it?

"I retired to my room; I was very glad to do so. I wanted very much to have had a bath there; I was very tired. The old lady lighted me upstairs; *she seemed a cross old thing*, and I went up into the bedroom. I asked her if I might have a bath, and she said, 'No, you cannot have a bath; there are no baths at the Queensberry Arms.' I said, 'Can you give me some soft water?' She said, 'No; you cannot have any soft water.'

"She had had a great wash-up. It was a very old sort of dialect that she spoke; it was very odd Scotch. I had never heard Scotch before, and it was very broad Scotch, and extremely difficult to understand. She said they had no soft water. I said, 'What kind of place do you call this?' I was but young, you know, and perhaps a little pert, and I said, 'What kind of place do you call this, where you have no soft water for people, nor a bath?' *She said, 'It is the Queensberry Arms, at Annan.'*"

Some relatives of the lady insisted upon the marriage being repeated in the South:—

"They were old-fashioned, excellent people, and they wished to have this marriage made in England; and it was made, and I was married by licence by the Rev. Thomas Knox, of Tunbridge Town. He was the chaplain of my cousin, Mr. Simpson, and held the living of Shipbourne from his giving." . . .

She goes on—

"Dundonald said 'Marry her! I would marry her in a hundred churches. I would marry her all over the world; but there is no marriage, my dear, so binding as the marriage which has been already executed in Scotland. She was from that hour my lawful wife. However, to give you satisfaction, I am ready to marry her in every church in London.' He said, 'I would do it a thousand times.'"

Then follow these questions and answers:—

"*I believe there was a subsequent marriage even after that?*"

"Yes; I was married again; in short, there was no end of marrying me."

"*When was your ladyship married the third time?*"

"I was married the third time when he came home from Brazil; I was married again."

"*Where was your ladyship married the third time?*"

"I was married the third time in Edinburgh; I was so tired of being married."

"*According to the forms of the Scotch Church?*"

"Yes; then I was asked in church, and domiciled. In short, I was bothered all to pieces with the marrying; I was asked in church. I was married at Mr. Strachan, the lawyer's, and married by Parson Ritchie; there was no marriage at all, he just joined the hands, Parson Ritchie did, and said something or other, and 'God bless you,' and that was the marriage in Scotland. *It was not a bit more like a marriage than the Annan marriage.* I was asked on the banns and domiciliated and everything. There was no end of marrying me. . . I was so tired of being married. . . I was bothered to pieces with the marrying."

Who can tell what is in the minds of half the reading girls in England when they come to that line of "In Memoriam,"

"Her sweet *I will* has made ye one,"

—what strange mystical force they put into any ceremony that takes the name of a marriage? Lady Dundonald thought that once was enough:—"I was tired of being married."

In what comes next, there is one touch—the name of the boat, *Tom Paine*—which carries us back to almost antediluvian things:—

"When he was released from the King's Bench Prison he went abroad, and I went with him. When he got out of the King's Bench he went away. I took him down to Dover, and we crossed from Dover to Boulogne in an open boat, because my husband had been so ill and so distressed at things which, God knows, he never merited, that I said, 'Come away, come out;' and I got him to come down to Dover, and went across with him, because we could not stay. I could not bear him to remain. We went across in an open boat, a boat called the '*Tom Paine*.' I remember that boat; I remember being on the deck of that vessel with my husband, who was distracted and wretched. I remember sleeping the whole night upon the open deck of that boat. We went over to Boulogne."

And here the narrative, considered from the romantic point of view, suffers an interruption. But Dundonald's career was nearly all of it interesting; and, what is more to our immediate purpose, we find that, very late in life, the element of poetry, so far as it existed in the emotions of the persons concerned, was as well defined as ever. Here are a few more touches, the first from the Lady's evidence, and others from letters of Lord Dundonald's appended to it:—

"My husband was a Scotchman, and proud of being a Scotchman; he would not have given up that birth of his for a crown in heaven. He gloried in being a Scotchman; he said it was the pride of his life, and he used, after his dinner, when he was drinking his wine, and so on, to bring in something about Scotland, his dear Scotland, the days of his youth—the happy days with his grandmother. It is a sad case; such sad reminiscences; such a noble man! . . ."

Now for a natural passage or two from the letters:—

"Lizzie and Arthur are quite well, and desire their love. Adieu, dear Cochrane. Your ever affectionate Father, DUNDONALD.

"P.S. Martin had double keys for the cellar, and has stolen half the wine!"

"To-morrow we are going to Lord Durham's, where the Princess Victoria and the Duchess of Kent are to be, together with all the great folks of the surrounding districts. You need not write to me, for I shall be with you before I could get a letter. *You had, however, better do so to your dear mama, who is truly anxious about your future destiny and welfare. She is now getting greatly better; indeed, I may say almost well.*"

"Remember the ice-house, to fill which every exertion must be made. *Mama loves nice things, and ice is a great comfort in hot weather.*"

And once more:—

"Dear mama is getting much better, and is able to take long walks, which will soon re-establish her health completely."

It would be an affront, both to good feeling and good literary taste, to make rhetorical capital out of things which so completely as these tell their own story. But in some cases, especially those to be gathered from newspapers, comment, criticism, and minute speculation will be required to make the latent romance visible, or sufficiently clear. And yet the stories are more startling and more pathetic than this of Lord and Lady Dundonald.

A. HUNTER.

## OUR DINNERS.

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### PREPARING TO EAT.

THE English cannot eat. They devour, they consume, they absorb; but the science of eating is beyond them—the manner mars the meal—the Beast is in too close proximity to the Beauty. The thought of a fair-faced ogress is always painful. There is something uncanny about beauty that is not, through and through, beautiful; a lovely woman who beats her children and servants, who indulges in oaths, or who devours unclean things, is an anomaly and a contradiction in terms. Only the beauty that springs from a gracious nature and gentle habits can ever really refine and beautify life. *A propos*, then, of our dinners, need I add that we must modify our vampire-like mode of eating?

We must eat, as we must dress, and there are a hundred ways of doing either. But, at any rate, what is done ought to be done well. For action good or bad has a definite influence upon character. And so dress will affect the mind, quite apart from the question whether it fits us, or becomes us, or keeps us warm, or otherwise fulfils the purpose for which it was put on. A sudden ribbon, a new style of arranging the hair, will sometimes change one's whole tone of thought and feeling, and even in some unintelligible way give a new zest to one's work. In like manner we all know how a dull appetite may be sharpened by the mode in which the food is dressed. A dish that looks pretty is more tempting than one more coarsely prepared, though the two may consist of the same materials. Moreover, the style of dressing one's body, or of feeding it, may lower or raise the tone of mind, and thus may be said to have a certain moral significance; but this is a possibility generally left entirely out of sight by the mass of English people, who dress and who dine—or rather *feed*—just as a positively animal ignorance prompts or permits them, and who, after the moment is past, never give a second thought to the more delicate influences of the meal or the mode.

To eat with real comfort, one's whole mind and body (especially the former) must be brought into a proper state. At our social gatherings the half hour before the meal should be spent in that kind of preparation which makes the dinner a climax, not a sudden relief from the most boring silence or still more boring conversation, pervaded by a deadly anxiety for some one or some thing to turn up, which is the usual impression conveyed by the half hour before dinner. In the

dining-saloon all the surroundings should be of an attractive, a joyous character, and yet not wanting in repose ; and, as far as that is possible (which is not far, alas ! according to our modern customs), every token that the preparation and the transport of the courses are a labour and sorrow, should be concealed.

It is a great mistake to have servants so much in the room during dinner ; still more so to have each dish brought in separately. The table ought to descend and ascend through an aperture in the floor, and be never seen in *déshabille*. This method has actually been adopted, and should never have been abandoned ; the saving to the servants and the additional comfort to the guests would be immense, and as in town houses the kitchen is usually underneath the dining-room, the whole thing might easily be arranged.

The walls of a dining-room should be carefully and tastefully decorated. The dining-room ought not to be too bare, else between the courses the mind is not diverted or elated, but depressed, and even conversation suffers. Not that the walls need to form part of the conversation, but because the decoration of them has a certain effect upon the mind. For this reason the ornamentation should not be unintelligent. It need not therefore be obtrusively sensational. Scenes of horror, or suffering, are inappropriate where all should be easy, *riante*, or at least restful. Small prints too far off to be distinguishable are very trying ; everything should be arranged with a studious care for the gratification of the mind through the eye. But more than this. *Most* important is the food : and here I come to the customs which (in England) I call vampire-like, and which stamp at once as unsæsthetic those who follow them. The ancient Greeks, the Brahmins, the Chinese, and many other, in some respects, 'benighted' races, would laugh at us, or weep for us. How ridiculously are we attired ! How barbarously do we feed ! What a ruffian must the cook be !

#### MEAT.

At table every hint that can remind the cheerful guest that he is eating creatures that have lived and enjoyed life, should be carefully removed. Only the weighty chains of habit, and the sacred customs handed down to us from our coarse and savage ancestors could blind our eyes to the exceeding ugly nature of our meals, or permit us to smile over and enjoy such delectable nastiness as, for instance, that time-honoured custom of cooking the smaller beasts whole.

Of course an age that still permits a butcher's shop in Bond Street, and can tolerate bleeding and mutilated carcasses in the most fashionable thoroughfares, can hardly be expected to be æsthetic in what it eats.

Now let me suggest, without being called a visionary, that the

shops above alluded to might be forbidden, or at all events suitably and tastefully disguised in our principal thoroughfares. But, indeed, such traffic ought to be confined to markets, of which there should be a sufficient number in the metropolis and in all towns. We should then be spared the large percentage gained by the retail purveyors of meat, and the poor would get their meat as they get their fish, *à prix fixe*. We could ourselves choose our meat and choose our man if we wished to do so: we should only have to go to the nearest market, or we could order what was necessary from the carrier in his cart, as we now do.

I have heard even civilised people object to this notion of concealing the butchery: "But how inconvenient for a cook who wanted an extra pound of meat in a hurry, to have to rush in a cab to the market two miles off, instead of slipping across the way, where she can choose her piece almost from the kitchen window!" Perhaps, my ingenious friend, our ancestors would once have thought it inconvenient to be obliged to go even so far for their joint, instead of having their own slaughter-house adjoining the hall. And yet there are now numerous sensible persons, who in order to purchase their meat and other necessities, at less than fancy prices, always send to Smithfield for the one, and to the Civil Service Stores for the other. They consider what is wanted for the day or the week, and are never compelled to rush out for odd bits at odd hours—nor are they seen, as we have often seen people, hurrying along the pavement with a trembling piece of flesh in a dirty little bit of newspaper, dripping rosy traces of its past life among the delicate Spring dresses of the more elegant street passengers.

This aversion to disagreeable-looking food is a very natural feeling, only it gets crushed out by custom. Many children, and even grown-up persons have a deep-rooted horror of 'under-done' meat. Sometimes they cannot conquer the horror they have of putting into their mouth what certainly looks very much like blood. Suppose the child pauses in a fit of disgust and agony at having to eat the stuff, it is soon brought to its senses by the wise and indignant parent—"Blood, indeed! if ever you dare to say that word again at dinner time! It is no such thing. Blood is only in the veins of the animal, and all such things are removed by the butcher. *This is GRAVY!*—Eat it up, every bit, or you shall have no pudding."

Now if we do not like to eat blood: and if it is forbidden even to speak of it: and if we weep over the poor shot horses that fill the plains of battle with carcasses that at least have their hides to cover them,—why should our eyes be needlessly affronted by such a sight as that little heap of blood and sawdust which rises under the snout of every sheep hanging in a butcher's shop? Why should our olfactory organs be disturbed by such a smell as that which issues from a large butcher's shop on a warm summer's day? I am not saying that we must not eat meat. It is necessary, or at least wholesome. But let

us eat it in a transformed and disguised condition; white or brown, decorated with almond spines or pretty tufts of parsley, surrounded by a fragrant sauce of flavoured gravy. Let us eat it separated from the bones and ligaments, cut into star-shaped outlets, packed into patties, or otherwise decently concealed. But the purveyor's shop, redolent of the most unbearable odours, full of reminders of the hunted, gasping beast, the cruel knife, and hideous as a dissecting room, is a remnant of an age when bloodshed did not sicken, when street-fighting, bull-baiting, and the heartless horrors of the arena were 'a right merrie conceit,' and made fair ladies laugh, when throughout the fields of 'merry' England hanging was so common that every other tree bore a decaying corpse or two, and nobler lives were taken with the hideous axe. We have only just perceived the propriety of conducting executions in private. Shall we soon carry our fastidious decency into the thoroughfares of London, and even into our own dining-rooms?

## OLD STYLE.

The Romans in their most luxurious days ate with their fingers. This fact assures me that, although they certainly had large dishes placed upon their table, they must have managed to carve them in a more refined way than we do, otherwise they could not have eaten without greatly splashing and soiling their costly garments.

The English, celebrated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for being the largest eaters in the world, used no knives or forks, and yet had joints, nay, even whole pigs and bullocks set before them. Did they soil their delicate furs, and long trains woven with seed pearls? Certainly they must have soiled them, and I do not doubt that not only were they a very dirty people, but they must have presented a revolting spectacle at dinner. Probably the bullock, or the eternal 'swine' they seemed to live on, was seldom cooked through, and each guest flung himself upon his favourite food, tore it in his hands, and crammed it into his mouth, and what he could not swallow he would cast upon the table cloth, which, as no plates were used, must have been drenched with grease.

But the Greek and Roman diners were not like this. Their table was rich with art, their waiters were beauteous in form and attire, their *cœna* was accompanied by burning perfumes and soft music—their dishes were prepared with the most fastidious sense of propriety and attractiveness. What would they say if they could witness our shapeless hunks of victual, our inartistic table, the coarse and bad attendance, the clumsy dress and dull discomfort of the guests? But no, they would never reach our dining-rooms! They would never get further than the hall—so redolent of roast mutton as many halls are when a dinner is about commencing, that our houses



are hardly bearable, save by the assistance of a handkerchief and lavender-water.

Moreover, in some ways, we are even worse than our gorging, guzzling, gross-feeding forefathers. If they liked to cook their edible beasts whole (and almost all was fish that came to their net) they at least had enough fancy to make them picturesque. A peacock sent in with its skin on and its tail spread, if a barbarous object, was at any rate, till it was cut, a beautiful one. A pig covered with heraldic devices in gold foil and flowers must have presented a curious spectacle; and then the eye was allowed a rest at the termination of each course, of which there were three, as at the Roman dinner,—and a ‘subtlety’—a barley-sugar castle, ship, or something of that sort—came in, which gave rise to mirth and witty sayings, and whose paste and stucco descendants we may now admire in Michell’s or Gunter’s windows. They were also in the habit of colouring their smaller meats with saffron, sandalwood, or indigo, so that they were often disguised and not unpleasing to the eye.

We do little of this kind. If we are going to eat the limb of a beast, we do not attempt to disguise it. Sometimes we put a little paper trouser around a leg of mutton or ham as much as to say “Do not mistake it. Do not suppose it to be any other part. It is a leg.” But we like our food “honest.” We are honest Englishmen, and we are not ashamed of what we do. Sometimes, indeed, one sees a ‘subtlety’—a hedgehog decorated with almond spines—but the almond spines should be anywhere but on a hedgehog. There they only serve to remind us again and again that it is by death we live; sometimes a cake or a cream is tortured into some comical shape, but the designs are invariably coarse, feeble, and unmeaning. We have no real culinary art in us. Days that shone on noble architecture and imperishable castles, also saw something of their motive reflected upon smaller matters. We retain a great deal of the grossness and rudeness of our ancestors without their rough but earnest sentiment.

#### NEW STYLE.

And now what is the matter with our dress at dinner-parties—and what can it signify how we sit or what we have on as long as we can reach our food? Let us enter any middle-class dining-room, where the dinner does not happen to be *à la Russe*. Look at the company at any ordinary dinner.

Look at the host first, whose whole attention ought to be centred on his guests, and on making the conversation brilliant and above all general. Poor fellow, he is working hard at the bottom of the table, through every course, for he has to carve. Of course he carves badly, having never studied that difficult art,—breaks a glass or two,—jokes in a crestfallen way over the accidents,—never hears when he is



addressed, or answers vaguely, his entire mind being fixed on the gravy—splashes his cuffs—manual labour in a tight dress-coat covers his wrinkled brow with honest drops—the sharp corners of his shirt-collar fix themselves into his jaw and bring the tears into his eyes. He eats nothing himself—the reason is obvious, he has not a moment to spare—never was a man so pressed for time, so anxious, so nervous, so bewildered.

Observe the hostess behind a tall pair of fowls. She knows she cannot move her arms freely (what woman in a low-necked dress ever could?), her bracelets entangle themselves with the legs of the fowl and with each other, and clank like chains and gyves. She gladly accepts the offer of the nearest cavalier made with half a heart, but *noblesse oblige*—to “save her the trouble.” Of course the gentleman carves worse than the host, because the dish is not in the right position for him—more crestfallen jokes—conversation flags—all watch him—he becomes more nervous and proceeds still more slowly—he explains that he is awkward—the guests wish he would not explain, as it delays him, and the remark is quite superfluous—his knife slipping sends a leg dancing across the table, where it settles in a nimbus of grease upon the hostess’s lap—she assures him with a glare that she “does not mind, on the contrary” . . . The silence is deadly . . . At last all are served, one of them having got all the meat, another all the gravy, and none of them any stuffing; the carver then obtains a little flabby scrap for himself, perfectly cold, just as all the other plates are removed.

Now for the rest of the company. They get enough to eat, but seldom the right kind, and they have other sorrows. They are obliged to sit alternately, men and women. It is the merest and remotest chance that they are well matched. It generally occurs that the youngest woman in the room is sent down with one of the oldest men, who may be quite deaf. I have heard a young wife complain that for three years she has never been taken down to dinner by any one under seventy. This is a very common mistake on the part of the hostess, and one which of course dooms ‘crabbed age and youth’ to dulness all dinner-time. The older and more honourable matrons are often no less unfortunate. A clever woman is seated beside a man who believes that stump-oratory is the sole aim of the ‘woman’s rights’ movement, and that an educated wife cannot take care of her husband’s house or bring up his children. A beautiful woman is portioned off with some ascetic ecclesiastic who supposes all beauty to be a snare of Satan. None of the ladies are comfortable. Their feet are cold, their heads are hot, their arms are so confined by their tight low dresses, that they can hardly cut their food, and, moreover, their skirts are being crushed by the crowding chairs on either side. In fact they are altogether got up as if for a dance, when to be sure exercise supplies some reason for scanty clothing.

The man nearest the host is in agony about his large and board-like shirt-front: what if that infatuated carver at the end of the table should splash him! He is afraid to look off the dish—he is fascinated by the play of the carving-knife, and if he does turn his head, his shirt-collar makes it an act of self-abnegation to address the lady on either hand. There is no possibility of changing the position. The chairs are packed so closely that each time the footman tries to reach anything on the table, his shoulder-knots tear down a chignon. Sometimes sauce descends upon the naked shoulder. Again crest-fallen jokes on the crowding, and the spoiling of a priceless pocket-handkerchief. *En fin*—the ladies begin to draw on their gloves as soon as dessert arrives—(what gloves are worn for at dinner I am at a loss to conceive). The hostess, after ‘catching’ her own ‘eye’ several times, at last succeeds in catching some one else’s. The ladies rise in the midst of a sentence and stumble from the room treading on each other’s skirts and dragging about chairs. As the door shuts, the gentlemen overhear the invariable remark on the stairs,—“Difference in the atmosphere outside!”

Arrived in the drawing-room there commences a regular witches’ sabbath. There are only three subjects mentioned when the ladies are alone and these are driven to death. In a ‘friendly’ company, these are the three D’s—Domestics, Diseases, and Dress. Why does not society advertise for a fourth D? In a more formal and solemn party, there is often only silence and deep meditation. Nobody knows anyone, every woman hates the rest, they have nothing in common, and they stare at each other like strange cats.

The gentlemen are more at their ease. There is much more room now. They eat raisins, try the wines, and tell anecdotes of Dickens and the Duke of Wellington. On their arrival in the drawing-room, which is performed in a meek and shamefaced way one at a time and almost unnoticed, the ladies just wait for the stock remark, “Pleasant fire!” to rise and depart in peace.

#### THE GUESTS.

Of course there are some dinners better, as there are some worse than this. In the best houses the servants are trained to a very perfect kind of waiting, such as it is—swift, and above all silent—but this only means that they work harder. At a dinner *à la Russe* the dishes are carved by the attendants on the sideboard, the host not attempting what he knows he cannot perform with grace and dignity. The table is covered from the first with the last and most ornamental course, dessert,—not works of art, statues or rich vases, but chiefly eatables, fruit and sweets; and what I have said of the middle-class dinner, holds good of the patrician meal to a great extent. There is a lamentable want of poetry, fancy, grace everywhere. The

selfsame objections must be urged against the placing and comfort of the guests. In fact, the greater the dinner the more evident the Juggernaut character of it becomes : and as for *general* conversation, it is unknown.

There can be no doubt that our modern dinners, whatever be their aim, practically fail in it. To the gourmand, who cares only for the dishes, they are a failure, for they are not sufficiently long for him, there is too little variety in the viands, a decided falling-off of late years in the wine-bibbing, and the courses are whisked away before he can quite assure himself of their flavour. To the girl who hopes to see, and be seen, they are a failure, for everyone knows that the close and formal arrangement of heads at a dinner, together with the general glitter of the table, arranged with a view to dazzle, not to set off the diners, prevents the finest face from 'telling.' Pictures packed close never tell as those do which are arranged some feet apart : a human face requires even more care, more space, more repose in its background, to set it off, and no pretty woman ever makes a due impression at a dinner-table. And the meal is equally a failure to the ordinary people, who look upon it as it should be looked upon—an opportunity for those who can seldom meet at any other time, to spend a few pleasant hours together. It is very proper that dinner should be the time fixed for these social gatherings. A company, like individuals, must meet on some common basis, on some equal footing. Everybody can eat ; therefore eating is a good common basis. But to make a number of people happy whose faculties do not begin and end upon that very moderate basis, there must be other bases supplied. Food is a good one to begin upon, but not to begin and end on.

The minds, opinions, tastes and ages of the guests ought to form the first consideration of the hostess ; it is not the easiest thing to find a dozen people perfectly suited to each other, but for a dinner to be ever a really pleasant one, this must be the case to a great extent ; it is the duty of the hostess never in inviting guests to mingle incongruous elements. She must herself set an example of ease and grace. During the dinner it is not her place to be watching the fish, and glancing anxiously about at the servants. It is her privilege to be the centre from which all the conversation, and tone of the conversation radiates. What she is, will influence the guests. It is her business to *know* that they will be sufficiently and properly served ; to *see* that they are comfortably placed and arranged, and that all are on an equality.

But is this the general rule, even at the best dinners, in the best houses ? Not at all. Instead of everything in the dinner being made subservient to the comfort of the guests, the guests are made the victims to the dinner. Some evil-disposed person takes it into his (or her) head to magnify himself by giving a dinner party, and instead of beginning the preparations by considering "Whose

pleasure and comfort can I best promote by making them my guests?" the hostess says to herself—"Who shall I sacrifice to my plate and china?" Never dreaming that the guests should be first and the dinner second, she invariably makes the dinner the primary object of attention, and does not reflect that the chief difficulty, as well as *duty* of a hostess, lies in properly matching and consulting the tastes of such guests as may have already accepted her invitation.

#### CLASSICAL DINNERS.

How much better it would be if we would take a hint or two from those old Romans in their togas and their stolas! How different was their preparation for their *cæna*, the one great meal, the festive climax of the day! Did they prepare themselves for a close pack by tightening all their garments as we do, fastening straps to our dress trousers, pulling in our waistcoat at the waist, fixing a painfully sharp-edged collar and an irreproachable muslin tie, (very much like a piece of tape) upon a shirt-front as expansive and as stiff as a sheet of tin? Did their ladies throw aside the day's easy gown for a low-necked garment of bursting tightness, with no sleeves, no kerchief; and did they sit regardless of draughts for three hours—wearing bracelets of the most dangling and inconvenient form ever made for dinner time.

On the contrary: the Romans prepared for their meals by extra ease and comfort of attire. Their loose and sweeping garments of the day were exchanged for a dress still more convenient, the short and coloured *synthesis*—they loosened their girdles, they adorned their heads with chaplets of roses or ivy—their very sandals were removed by an attendant, who offered them perfumed water as they took their places. Nine, the number of the Muses, was the utmost number of guests for one table, only three of whose sides were occupied by the luxurious couches, or *lecti*, covered with costly drapery, and inlaid with ivory and tortoise-shell, on which the men reclined during the repast; the fourth side was left vacant for the servants to place the tall trays containing the different courses—each course being changed *at once*, and no single dishes being brought in one by one, after the modern ridiculous fashion.

Three men usually occupied one *lectus*, the seats being indicated by cushions, on which the diner leaned his left elbow, as he ate the clean delicious viands, without forks, without knives, (sometimes a kind of spoon was used,) and contemplated a table covered with works of art made of the rarest materials—all that the master possessed of richest or best was there displayed, whilst bright flowers or lighted perfumes, burning in vases of exquisite workmanship, prevented the flavour of one course from infecting the next; the women, who did not recline, but sat upon chairs, were sufficiently isolated to be set off to proper

advantage; and the company listened to the very best music procurable at the time, or joined in a conversation which for two thousand years has been proverbial for its wit, grace, and brilliancy.

Between each course, or at least between what was called the *gustus* and the first course of the *cæna*, and again at its termination, fragrant waters were handed round, the attendants being boys or women chosen for the beauty of their appearance and manners, and robed almost as superbly as the guests. If the dinner lasted into the evening, for it was a long ceremony though its commencement was usually so early, the magnificent saloon was lit by a thousand lamps that glittered from amongst a wealth of blossoms, upon the golden statues and amber vessels, whilst the whole *coup d'œil* was united and combined as an artist would express it, by a canopy of purple or scarlet, that overhung the group. Sometimes a harp was carried round, and those of the guests who had a turn for music or poetry, played or recited songs to the rest. At other times they laughed at the feats of agile acrobats who danced on ropes almost over their very heads, or tossed up eggs, as in Alma Tadema's matchless picture of Pompeian life.

There does not appear to have been any formal arrangement in the seating of the guests as in our own day. Sometimes the host assigned the places, but generally the guests were left to choose their own. The "place of honour" was the first seat on the *medius lectus* (middle couch) where the cushion was supported by a little railing. The host's usual seat was adjoining it, the first seat of the *Imus lectus*, the least honourable of the three benches. Plutarch, who discusses the matter in a special chapter (*Sympos. i. 2*) decides that the choice of places should be left entirely to the will of intimate friends and young people, and only assigned in the case of strangers, or guests requiring peculiar distinction. How much more pleasant this, than the modern rule, which fixes each into a certain place, whether he likes it or no—perhaps next to the last person he would have chosen to sit by: a thing which the hostess, even if well-disposed and thoughtful, cannot always foresee, or foreseeing prevent. But we can get hints, even from the Chinese, whose civilisation we despise, and need not confine ourselves to classical times; we have much to learn from our contemporaries all over the world.

#### HINTS FROM CHINA.

The Chinese have many pretty and appropriate dinner forms. Captain Laplace, of the French navy, gives a sprightly account of a formal dinner which I cannot do better than quote. The "Celestials" at least seem to have none of our massive joints or half-done steaks, but prefer their victuals minced and disguised—a far more civilised mode of eating, as it seems to me, than that adopted by the "Terrestrial" Empires of the world.

"The first course," writes Laplace, "was laid out in a great number of saucers of painted porcelain, and consisted of various relishes in a cold state, as salted earthworms prepared and dried, but so cut up that I fortunately did not know what they were until I had swallowed them; salted or smoked fish or ham, both of them cut into extremely small slices; besides which there was what they called Japan leather, a sort of darkish skin, hard and tough, with a strong and far from agreeable taste, which seemed to have been macerated in water for some time. All these *et ceteras*, including among the number a liquor which I recognised to be soy, made from a Japan bean and long since adopted by the wine-drinkers of Europe to revive their faded appetites or tastes, were used as seasoning to a great number of stews which were contained in bowls, and succeeded each other uninterruptedly. All the dishes, without exception, swam in soup: on one side figured pigeon's eggs cooked in gravy, together with ducks and fowls cut very small and immersed in a dark-coloured sauce: on the other, little balls made of shark's fins, eggs prepared by heat, (of which both the smell and taste seemed to us equally repulsive,) immense grubs, a peculiar kind of seafish, crabs and pounded shrimps."

The next page is devoted to complaints and jests upon the two little ivory chop-sticks tipped with silver, which are of course very difficult for an European accustomed as he is to fork and knife, to use effectually. But the chop-sticks appear to me a far more appropriate instrument in the hands of a lady than our own dangerous weapons of feeding. The association of a gentle maiden with a fork, to say nothing of a knife, is to my mind an unnatural one. Knives and forks should be left to the brawny fists of the cook's assistants. In the refined dining-room some milder instruments, or none, should be employed.

"The wine," continues Laplace, "circulated freely, and the toasts followed each other in rapid succession. The liquor was taken hot... We drank it in little gilt cups, having the shape of an antique vase, with two handles of exquisite workmanship, and kept constantly filled by attendants holding large silver vessels like coffee pots.

"After all these good things served one upon the other, of which it gave me pleasure to see the last, succeeded the second course, which was preceded by a little ceremony, the object of which seemed to be a trial of the guests' appetites. Upon the edges of four bowls arranged in a square, three others were placed, filled with stews, and surmounted by an eighth, which thus formed the summit of a pyramid; and the custom is, to touch none of these, although invited by the host. On the refusal of the party, the whole disappeared, and the table was covered with articles in pastry and sugar, in the midst of which was a salad composed of the tender shoots of the bamboo, and some watery preparations that exhaled a most disagreeable odour.

"Up to this point the relishes of which I first spoke had been the sole accompaniment of all the successive ragouts. They still served to season the bowls of plain rice which the attendants now for the first time placed before each guest.

"... The second course lasted a much shorter time than the first: the attendants cleared away everything. Presently the table was strewed with flowers, which vied with each other in brilliancy. Pretty baskets filled with the same were mixed with plates which contained a vast variety of delicious sweetmeats as well as cakes, of which the forms were as ingenious as they were varied. Napkins steeped in warm water, and flavoured with otto of roses, are frequently handed to each guest by the servants in attendance."

The Chinese, among their innumerable little dishes, utilise a great many creatures which we consider 'unclean.' The wealthier classes are greatly addicted to gastronomic enjoyment, and are quite as particular in their way as a Frenchman could be. The masses, owing to their poverty and the scarcity of pasturage, consume little meat, milk, or butter, and substitute for the latter the oil of the *Sesamum orientale*, and the castor-oil plant *Ricinus communis*, which in a cooked state appear to lose their detergent qualities. Of meat, the most universal is pork. Fish, ducks, and wild fowl are plentiful, and plentifully devoured. Dogs, cats, rats, and mice are largely eaten by the poorer classes. The larvæ of the sphinx moth, and a grub bred in the sugar-cane, shark's fins, the Dytiscus or water-beetle, even silkworms fried (after the cocoon is spun), are among the stranger delicacies, and the rich indulge in the costly bird's-nest soup, sea-slugs, and paws of bears. The Tartars are addicted to a soup composed of mare's milk and blood, which seems odious enough to English tastes. But none of these things are, from an æsthetic point of view, as irretrievably bad as the great mass of flesh-meat, done or underdone, with its own bones and joints in it, which seems indispensable at the table of an English gentleman.

English people are often heard to complain of the want of variety in their food. The housewife often despairingly exclaims, "Would that some new animal could be invented!" It is true—beef, mutton, veal—veal, mutton, beef—turkey, fowl—fowl, turkey—are a little wearing. In spring-time, a safe wager might be laid at every dinner, that salmon and lamb will appear—there is seldom anything else. At other times of the year, one can be almost as certain of what one will get. All dinners are exactly alike. If we except the houses of very aristocratic, very wealthy, or very artistic people, the patterns on the plates are almost the same everywhere else—so are the d'oyleys—so are the wine-glasses—so are the silver epergnes; and why these things should be so is a mystery; but then the English are not an artistic people!



## ODD FOOD.

Why should we so seldom take hints from the continental tables? Certainly we profess to have our model in the French cuisine, where the cooks are artists; but is this practically the case? Surely not. Our meals are in every respect absolutely different from theirs, and so is the arrangement of the courses, and the preparation of the dishes. Besides, they actually eat a great number of things that our insular prejudice forbids us to touch. We pay enormously for oysters, but we scorn the notion of eating frogs or snails. Our poor must have meat, whatever be the price, yet a starving man in England would reject horse. We delight in mushrooms, but nothing can induce us to touch any other kind of fungus, except the truffle, although there are many as good, and far more plentiful. Why should a nation that does not object to crabs and pigs, decline caterpillars, rats, mice, and other clean-feeding animals? Why should hares and rabbits be sought after, and myriads of cats simply wasted?

Many sea things are eaten by the Italians and Swiss which we are horrified at, such as limpets and gelatinous creatures. Snakes in many countries are known to be capital eating; and why should they be thought worse of than eels? Soyer, in his "History of Food," gives good reasons for eating a number of creatures forgotten or condemned by us. The Roman peasant considered a young fox, fattened on grapes and roasted on the spit, a morsel for a king in autumn time. We might do better with the foxes we hunt so laboriously, than give them to the hounds. The Greeks willingly ate the hedgehog in a *ragoût*, and so did the English until lately, and most delicious it is said to be.

Among birds, many kinds eaten by our forefathers with *goût*, have now come to be rejected by us, simply through their diminished numbers. Swans, peacocks, cranes, bitterns, herons, curlews, &c., are instances of this—we would not eat them now—yet only their increasing scarcity caused them to be discontinued. Rooks, jackdaws, magpies, and in fact all the common native birds were prized in the fifteenth century, and now only a few of them are considered delicate enough for our refined and fastidious tables.

Indeed our fastidiousness is almost too great nowadays, only it seems to set the wrong way, and the poor are more particular than the rich. The welcome invention of Australian beef, mutton, tongues, etc., all of which are the very best of their kind, is only objected to because so much cheaper than our own; but these admirable preparations are beginning to make their appearance on all the best tables as occasional dishes, and by many thrifty middle class families, they are largely consumed. But the poor, some of them people who hardly know what it is to touch meat, turn up their



dainty noses at "Australian stuff." But perhaps even *they* will condescend to accept it in a few years' time.

## CHEESE AND OLIVES.

The Italian cookery of the best kind is extremely good and very varied. Cheese, olives, beans, and many vegetables we ignore, enter largely into their catalogue of relishes and flavourings. What manifold delicacies we might prepare with cheese! Abroad it is eaten in powder with all kinds of soup, as flavouring to beef, vegetables, curry, &c. Soyer has a great deal to say about cheese. He begins, "A demigod, Aristeus, son of Apollo and king of Arcadia, invented cheese, and the whole of Greece welcomed with gratitude this royal and almost divine present." The Hebrews sometimes mention it in their sacred writings. Mare's milk, ass's milk, but above all camel's milk, make the most exquisite cheese. Mixed milks were used by the Phrygians, Scythians, and Greeks, the Sicilians also mixed the milk of goats and ewes. The pale goat's milk cheese so much used in Germany, the South of France, and Switzerland at the present day is very pleasant in taste, and not so provocative of thirst as Dutch cheeses and our own salt cheeses. It there frequently replaces butter.

As for the olive—oh! delicate fruit, fit for a queen's lips, with its soft grey-green skin, like the green in sunset skies,—alas! in England the olive is hardly seen at all upon the table, seldom used in cookery. Why this is so I cannot understand. The love of olives is certainly an acquired taste, one may eat them three or four times and hate them, and then one fine day try another and suddenly like them. There is a strange fragrance in the taste of them only detected after they are eaten, which is most subtle and delicious. It can only be compared to a whiff of the sea wafted across a hyacinth field in spring; and if any fortunate reader has ever stood on one of the hills near Lyme Regis in Devonshire, where the distance is blue with these fragrant flowers, and the green fields are covered with a kind of blue haze where they grow, and felt the sea breeze sweep along them—he may go home and eat olives and understand them.

## ORNAMENT.

Why in the name of all that is artistic, should there be but one law to govern the arrangement of every dinner that is given, whatever be the tastes, requirements, education, or incomes of the givers? Why must the cloth be white, the napkins white, the glasses white, with a very tall dish or epergne in the centre of the board, two smaller ones, or candelabra, on each side—if the host has not these things he must hire them—an even number of flat dishes ranged at equal distances along the table in double row, two, or four, or six pots of flowers,

placed quite formally, without the slightest deviation or change—there is the usual dinner table. Is it not this deep-rooted admiration for exactitude and formality, and mistrust of originality and the vagaries of genius, that have measured and smoothed and weighed all the picturesque beauty out of English fabrics and manufactures of every kind? Does not this account in great measure for the fact that every flower or fern leaf engraved on our glass ware, every representation of people and landscapes on our china, the paintings on our fans, the form of our houses, the shape of our furniture, the texture of our dresses, is so hopelessly inferior to those made four hundred years ago—to say nothing of two thousand—that we are always striving to get back again to the old forms, the old colours, the old wondrous handicraft. In ancient cloth and silk the unevenness of the threads, a flaw that would not be tolerated nowadays by the most careless overseer, is the actual cause of the extreme beauty of the fabrics, the imperfect colours form the inimitable tints that painters love, and that are never seen in modern dyes. The old Venetian glass, now priceless and rare, will be found exceedingly irregular in colour and form, often the bottles do not even stand straight, the ornaments in twisted glass laid on them are generally different on the two sides—the maker followed the whim of his genius as he worked, and never cut or measured his work to see that every spot or line corresponded with every other. These so-called flaws are of constant recurrence in all Oriental work. The enamel of flowers painted on their vases is thicker or darker in one place than another, we find a carpet where six spots are considered sufficient match to five—et cetera, *ad lib.* We are only just beginning to perceive that it is to this we owe half the picturesque element in these things—not that inaccuracy alone makes a thing beautiful, far from it—but that over-accuracy, over-care which slackens the freedom of the hand and dulls the instincts of the mind, is certain to beget that feebleness, tameness, and want of spirit and fire which is so noticeable in modern work whatever its kind or degree, and which is seldom found in the work of previous ages, however barbaric.

Let us, then, not be afraid to go an inch out of the beaten track. Let us not fear to place occasionally, when laying out our table, a dish a little awry, just to take off that sense of immaculateness, untouchableness, that the measured formality of a dinner-table always gives one. Let us even sometimes assert our independence by having an uneven number of dishes, or dishes of irregular height placed along the snow-white cloth. And why is the cloth to be always snow-white? Why should not a coloured border, fringe, or stripe, be introduced to break the blank spotlessness of that inevitable cloth? Again: the extreme fineness of the table-cloth, is a point of pride with the modern housewife. Let the design be what it will, the cloth must be fine. Now, a very coarse cloth, pro-

vided the pattern upon it be handsome, has not a bad effect; on the contrary, it is far more pleasant to the eye than too fine a one. The napkins—which are theoretically supposed to be to wipe the fingers or lips upon, but which, through their weight and stiffness, never answer the purpose—ought to be fine: the table cloth should be rather the reverse. A handsome diaper is probably the most appropriate pattern for a damask cloth, and it is sure to tell if the cloth is not too fine—borders or stripes of every variety might with advantage be introduced into them.

Let me also pray such hostesses as wish their table to be beautiful, to dispense with the modern white wine-glasses, which, however perfect of their kind, are quite uninteresting to an artistic eye. The antique Venetian glass, so exquisite in colour, so delicate and picturesque in form, so light, yet hardly so fragile as the modern best glass, as the latter from its weight as opposed to its thinness, *must* smash if it falls, and the former may not—the antique Venetian can hardly be procured now in sufficient quantities to cover a table, or at least by ordinary purses. But the modern imitations of it, by Salvati, though usually not equal to the old, are quite near enough to be very beautiful on the table, and within the means of most dinner-giving people.

Again, why are the designs of modern dinner and dessert-services so bad! Why are the soup-tureens so bloated and gouty? Why are the paintings on the plates so tame and silly—the colours so staring, and yet not brilliant? Why are the handles of all covered dishes mere shapeless lumps, vulgarly streaked with useless and unmeaning dashes of gold? People do not seem to notice these things when they select their china or other things as they do when they select a picture.

I am speaking of ordinary tables. I am glad to recognise in much of Wedgwood's and Minton's china some of the most beautiful forms and combinations of colour. But these are almost, without exception, copies or adaptations of antique wares, and in cost far beyond the purses of ordinary middle-class people, in whose houses these works of art are very seldom seen. I confess that some of the china ornamented with rough and spirited sketches—evidently by French artists—the enamelled turquoise borders and little pre-Raphaelite heads of girls and children, are quite exquisite; but unhappily the men are rare who could furnish their tables with services even more costly than the old Worcester, Dresden, or Majolica.

Again, let us not pile our flower-baskets and fruit-trays a yard high, not even, O impatient housewife! the centre-piece. Let your guests be able to see each other across the hospitable board. Let the table be low, and covered sufficiently, but not too much, with flat and pretty dishes, never over-full, never too formally arranged, and decked with fresh flowers or even autumn leaves. You can never have too many real flowers upon your table: they refresh the senses,

and often modify the too overpowering odours of the dishes. Introduce without fear such tasteful articles as may brighten and adorn the table—rare china, statuettes, Indian jars, queer old ladles. These will satisfy the hunger of the mind, while your fine old fruity or dry wines and various courses are fortifying the body—it is so pleasant to have something interesting to look at, and it is so seldom there is anything but the food. The decoration of the dining-room is frequently neglected. There are often no pictures on the walls, no flowers on the table, nothing to satisfy any other of our faculties except the gastronomic one; and if we chance to sit by a wearisome or unsympathetic companion, we feel the want all the more painfully. Perhaps some day we may hope to see armchairs and plenty of elbow room substituted for the uncomfortable crowd of narrow seats; but this at present seems so far off that we had better say no more about it. At present we do not seem to be alive to considerations of either comfort or beauty.

We are the slaves of 'use and wont.' Habit blinds our eyes to the detestable nature of many of our customs—prejudice and cowardice prevent us from abolishing or modifying what is seen to be bad. An immense insular self-conceit often hinders us from adopting what is really superior in the customs of foreigners; a want of artistic feeling makes us helpless and awkward in what we do adopt, and a still greater want of imagination leads us to reject any hints that are from time to time thrown out for our improvement. The stupidity of our ladies is the despair of French dressmakers—the unconscious grossness of our tastes is a staple subject of ridicule all over the continent,—our affected connoisseurs drive musicians and artists mad,—our modern houses, including the chimney-pots, may occasionally be comfortable, but are, as a rule, devoid alike of intelligence and refinement: our social gatherings are often marred by the unnatural union of Quaker stiffness with vulgar and inexcusable licence, and our public thoroughfares are a disgrace to the nineteenth century.

MAY HAWES.

## THE ASRAI

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'Tis midnight, and the light upon my desk  
Burns dim and blue, and flickers as I read  
The gold-clasp'd tome, whose stained yellow leaves  
Feel spongy to the touch yet rough with dust,  
When Clari, from her chamber overhead,  
Her bright hair flowing brighter from the brush,  
Steals in, and peeps, and sits upon my knee,  
And winds her gentle arms around my neck,  
And sidelong peeping on the page antique  
Rains her warm looks, and kisses as I read.

"Before man grew of the four elements  
The Asrai grew of thrée—fire, water, air—  
Not earth,—they were not earthly. That was ere  
The opening of the golden eye of day :  
The world was silvern,—moonlight mystical  
Flooded her glimmering continents and seas,—  
And in green places the pale Asrai walked  
To deep and melancholy melody,  
Musing, and cast no shades.

"These could not die  
As men die : Death came later ; pale yet fair,  
Pensive yet happy, in the silvern light  
The Asrai wander'd, choosing for their homes  
All gentle places—valleys mossy deep,  
Star-haunted waters, yellow strips of sand  
Kissing the bright edge of the glittering sea,  
And glittering caverns in the gaunt hill-sides  
Frosted with gems and dripping diamond dew  
In mossy basins where the water black  
Bubbled with wondrous breath. The world was pale,  
And these were things of pallor ; flowers and scents,  
All glittering things, came later ; later still  
Ambition, with thin hand upon his heart,  
Crept out of heaven and hung the heights of earth  
With lights miraculous ; later still, man dug  
Out of the caves the thick and golden glue  
That knits together the stone ribs of earth.  
Nor flowers, nor scents, the pallid Asrai knew,  
Nor burning aspiration heavenward,  
Nor blind dejection downward under earth

After the things that glitter. Their desires  
 Shone stationary—gentle love they knew  
 For one another—and in their pale world  
 Silent they walked and mused, knowing no guile,  
 With lives that flow'd within as quietly  
 As rain-drops dripping with bright measured beat  
 From mossy cavern-caves."

O Love! My love!

How thy heart beats! how the fond kisses rain!

We cannot love like those—ours is a pain,

A tumult, a delirium, a dream.

O little one of four sweet elements,

Fire on thy face, and moisture in thine eyes,

Thy white breast heaving with the rich rare air,

And in thy heart and on thy kissing mouth

The warmth, the joy, the impulse, and delight

Of the enamour'd gentle-hearted earth

Bright with the flowery fulness of the sun!

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

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## OFF THE SKELLIGS.

By JEAN INGELOW.

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### CHAPTER IX.

"They are fainthearted; there is sorrow on the sea."

*Jeremiah, xlix. 23.*

WE lay at anchor that night in Portland roads, and I enjoyed the calm. In the morning the sea was smooth, and, to my delight, the sickness did not return. Miserable as it had been, it had not for a moment made me forget my happy position, or wish myself on shore again.

Tom and I spent part of the next morning together. He was amused, I think, at my return, but I observed that if I mentioned Ipswich or my school life it did not excite the least interest, but rather seemed to tease him. He naturally could not feel that absorbing interest in me and my concerns that I did in his, and I wished then, and do now, to remember that he had passed several happy years without me, but my years had not been happy without him: no new interest had sprung up to supply his place, no present joy or adventure to blot out the memory of the past; this was one great reason why I remembered him and my uncle so keenly and lovingly. I know that we partly remember the absent because we want them;—if their places are fully supplied after a time it is not natural that we can want them so much, and reason ought to make us consent to their being comfortable and happy without us, if they can.

In the pleasant weather of that day Tom proposed that we should arrange the after cabin so as to hold my possessions comfortably and yet retain many of his.

It was a delightful and luxurious room, this cabin. In one of the berths shelves had been fitted, to hold Tom's books. The ordinary contrivances for keeping these steady during a voyage caused much admiration in my mind, so did his beautiful telescope and his scientific instruments. He emptied as many lockers for me as I had any use for, and I found that he had a considerable command of money, for he spoke of the books he bought, and of his subscription to more than one London library, as if he could do anything he chose, and have anything he wished for. I did not, however, venture to ask him about this, for he did not invite confidence; and I felt with him, as I had done with Mr. Mompesson, that I was a stranger to him, though he was well known to me.

When he had made a place for my possessions, he took away those of his own that had been displaced, and I, knowing that we were bound for the Great Skellig, went to the chief cabin, where most of my brother's books were kept, and privately made myself fully acquainted with the hard-hearted monster, an isolated rock standing about ten miles out to sea, off the south-west coast of Kerry.

My heart exulted as I read, and I longed for calm, that I might see it well; how grand, how sublime to approach this the extreme point of British land, this mighty pinnacle nearly a thousand feet high, shooting up alone from the abyss of waters, and to know that in a storm the vast heaving waves of the Atlantic flung themselves heavily over ledges that are one hundred and seventy feet above their level during a calm, and wet the rock with their powdering spray four hundred feet higher still, charging it and roaring and foaming against it with a power and fury inconceivable.

The lesser Skellig, too, I wished to see, for I found it was one of the breeding-places of the gannet, and that millions of young birds at that time of the year would be squatting on it encased in their thick down and screaming for fresh fish to their laborious parents.

That was a delightful day; and if a little breeze had not sprung up the next morning, and sent me to my berth, making me doubt whether, when the rocks appeared, I should be able to sit up and look at them, I should have been as happy as youth, health, and a clear conscience can make one in this sublunary sphere.

This was a most dismal attack, but happily it was the last I ever suffered from. There had been a stiff breeze, and all in our favour, I was told; and after what seemed a long time, I felt not only that I was much better, but that the water was becoming every quarter of an hour more smooth. I could soon sit up, and though faint for want of food, I was not giddy, and when Mrs. Brand had dressed me I crept on deck and found the water all lulled and hardly moving against the bows. We were in the midst of a sea fog, and everything was muffled and still. We were about sixty miles out to sea, as Mrs. Brand told me, and what wind there had been when it died away was almost due-south.

She thought it was likely to be calm all night, and told me that while the fog lasted we should not make for the shore, the coast being very dangerous. I asked her while eating a good meal of meat and bread on deck, how fast we were going, and she laughed and replied, "Not a quarter of a knot an hour." My uncle and Tom were sitting at wine, for they had dined. It was about six o'clock, and though the fog was so thick that I could not see the top of the mainsail, I felt the air oppressively warm.

When my uncle and Tom came on deck they were very kind in their congratulations, and stimulated me in my efforts to look and talk as if nothing had happened, by saying that if this sickness had

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lasted another day it would really have been necessary to put me on shore.

I declared myself to be quite well, and so I felt; but any one might have felt well then, for the yacht was almost as still as a house.

Before sunset the fog cleared off sufficiently to show us a vast flock of white terns flying over us, their feet stretched out, and their heads hanging so low, that we expected them every moment to overbalance themselves and come tumbling down. They did not, however, but fled on till the sun went down, and then we still heard their shrill cries overhead, as they flew landward.

Then the mist seemed to come about us again, and when after a sociable tea I came on deck, it was so dusk and damp, that Tom advised me to go below to my berth. Not very bad advice, for I was tired and sleepy. I went below, intending to lie down, but only for an hour, and come on deck again, but had scarcely laid my head on the pillow when I fell very fast asleep, and slept some time, probably till within an hour of midnight.

In a dream that was a rapture of conscious rest, and which concerned imaginary cups of coffee and bread and butter, I slept most quietly till I was suddenly awoke by a violent and tremendous noise on deck. I started up in my berth, and instantly observed that the cabin lamp was lighted, and that Mrs. Brand, who had been sitting under it reading, had put down her book and quickly opened the door. Just as I was about to call her her skirts disappeared as she shut it behind her.

It was not nearly so calm now as when I had fallen asleep, and I felt that the whole vessel was in commotion. First I thought we must be shortening sail, next I thought I heard something about lowering a boat.

I was not alarmed at this, but still sat up to listen. The helm seemed to have been violently put about. That was not surprising, if it was the case, but we were sixty miles out at sea. What could they want with a boat?

Yes, in less than a minute I felt sure something was the matter, and the stamping above, the shouting and dragging of ropes so distracted me, that I sprang from my berth, and slipped my feet into my shoes, for otherwise I was completely dressed. I knew that any needless alarm on my part would irritate my uncle; but ignorant as I was of what different noises portended, I could not keep below, but softly opening my cabin door, I stole a step or two up the companion, and directed my eyes upward among the rigging and the overhanging stars.

These last were visible, but looked watery through the remains of the mist. I crept softly up to the top step of the companion, where Mrs. Brand was standing, and would have passed her, but the sailors

were in every part of the yacht, lowering the foresail and heaving her to. Long ropes were being trailed along, and Brand as he passed exclaimed to his wife, "Don't let our young lady step on deck; she would put her foot on some of the ropes to a certainty, and get thrown down."

"What is it?" I exclaimed; "what can it be?"

She pointed with her finger, and as the yacht swung round she said, "Look there, ma'am, look!"

As she spoke two strange objects came into my view. One was a great pale moon, sickly and white, hanging and seeming to brood over the horizon; the other, which looked about the same size, was red and seemed to lie close at her side. It was not round, but looked blotted and blurred in the mist. Could it be a meteor? a light-house? Whatever it was, it was the cause of the commotion which had been so intense, and which now seemed to be already subsiding. I had heard the men called up not three minutes before, and now two boats were already lowered, and Tom was in command of the foremost. I heard his voice coming from the water, and no one prevented me now from rushing to the side to look over, turning my back on the moon and her lurid companion. Though the night was not dark, I could not discern the boats; and after straining my eyes into the mist, I observed that it was rapidly melting away and rolling on, as well as rolling together, so that spaces of water here and there were clear, and moonlight glittered on them. The binnacle light glared in my uncle's face as he stooped over it. I heard Brand whisper to his wife that he had taken charge of the yacht, and I did not dare to speak to him, though what it might be that alarmed them I could not tell.

It was as it seemed but a moment that I had stared out into the mist looking for the boats with still sleepy eyes; then as the sailors that were left tramped back to the forepart of the yacht, I turned again. The mist had shaken itself and rolled on before a light air that was coming. I saw two great pathways now lying along the waters,—one was silver white, the pathway of the wan moon, the other was blood-red and angry, and a burning vessel lay at her head.

Oh that sight! can I ever forget it? The fire was spurting from every crevice of the black hull, her great mainmast was gone, the mizen mast lay with several great white sails surging about in the water, and she was dragging it along with her. The foremast only stood, and its rigging and sails had not yet caught. A dead silence had succeeded now to the commotion in the vessel: men were standing stock-still, perhaps waiting for their orders, and my uncle's were the only eyes that were not strained to follow the leaping and dazzling spires.

Every moment we approached. Now the first waft of the smoke

came in our faces, now we could hear a cracking and rending, the creak and shiver, and the peculiar roaring noise made by a mastering fire.

"A full-rigged ship," I heard Brand whisper to his wife. "Eleven hundred tons at the least."

"Merciful heaven!" she whispered in reply. "I hope she won't blow up. Anyhow, I thank the Lord we've got *Master* in command himself."

I never saw anything like the horrible beauty of that red light. It added tenfold to the terror of the scene to see her coming on so majestically, dragging with her broken spars and great yards and sprawling sails. She looked like some splendid live creature in distress, and rocked now a good deal in the water, for every moment the wind seemed to rise, bringing up a long swell with it.

The moon went down, and in a few minutes the majestic ship supplied all the light to the dark sky and black water. I saw the two little dark boats nearing her, knew that my brother was in the foremost, and shook with fear, and cried to God to take care of him; but while I and all gazed in awful silence on the sailing ship, the flames bursting through the deck in a new place, climbed up the fore-rigging, and in one single leap, as if they had been living things, they were licking the sails off the ropes, and, shooting higher than her topsails, they spread themselves out like quivering fans. I saw every sail that was left in an instant bathed in flames; a second burst came raging up from below, blackening and shrivelling everything before it; then I saw the weltering fire run down again, and still the wreck, plunging her bows in the water, came rocking on and on.

"How near does our old man mean to go?" whispered Mrs. Brand; and almost at that instant I observed that he had given some order to the man at the helm, and I could distinctly hear a murmur of satisfaction; then almost directly a cry of horror rose—we were very near her, and while the water hissed with strange distinctness, and steamed in her wake, her blazing foremast fell over the side, plunging with a tremendous crash into the sea, sending up dangerous showers of sparks and burning bits of sailcloth, and covering our decks with falling tinder.

The black water took in and quenched all that blazing tophammer, and still the awful hissing was audible, till suddenly, as we seemed to be sheering off from her, there was a thunderous roll that sounded like the breaking of her mighty heart, and still glorious in beauty she plunged head foremost, and went down blazing into the desolate sea.

In one instant that raging glow and all the fierce illumination of the fire was gone; darkness had settled on the face of the deep. I saw a few lighted spars floating about, that was all; and I smelt the

fire and felt the hot smoke rushing past my face as the only evidence that this was not a dream.

Oh, the misery of the next half hour ! the boats when that ill-fated ship went down must, I knew, have been very near her. Had they been sucked in ? Had they been overturned, or had they been so blessed as to be saved and to save some of the wretched passengers and crew ? Of all persons in the yacht then perhaps I suffered most. I was the most ignorant ; I had no one to speak to, for Mrs. Brand, perhaps lest I should question her, had retreated, and I could not think of addressing my uncle,—he had plenty on his mind and on his hands. I could only observe the activity of others by the light of the many lanterns which were now hung out from various parts of the rigging, and hope that we should soon find the boats, though every light hung up seemed to increase the darkness, and make us more unable to see anything beyond the bounds of the yacht.

At last Brand standing near me again, I said, " Oh, Brand, cannot we go nearer the place where that ship sunk ? perhaps some poor creatures may be floating on the waters still."

" Ma'am," he replied, " we are sailing now as nigh as may be over the very spot where she went down ; but you have no call to be frightened,—everything has been done that can be done. We hove to directly we sighted her."

" Yes," I said ; " but what good could that do ?"

" Why, ma'am," he replied, " we could not have lowered the boats without that ; and then, you know, when they were off we filled, and stood in as nigh as we dared."

" Then where are the boats ?" I inquired.

" God knows, ma'am."

" And what are these lights for ? every one you put up makes it harder to see anything. How are we to find them ?"

" We have no call to find them," he replied ; " we want them to find us. Most likely there are other boats about, besides our own—boats from the ship,—we want to make ourselves as conspicuous as we can. At least, I reckon that is why *Master* has ordered all these lights out."

" And why cannot we pick up any of the poor creatures that may have been on board ? Surely we could have heard their cries, and could now,—we are not half a quarter of a mile from her."

" No, ma'am, nothing like that distance, not half that distance—that's why our people think she may have been deserted."

The steward passed on, and I covered my face with my hands and moaned in the misery of my heart. Oh, my only brother, had I really lost him so ?

I listened. The silence about me was so intense that I knew there was much anxiety felt : every face as it passed under a lantern had a

restless and yet awe-struck look ; my uncle's when he bent over the illuminated compass did not at all reassure me.

But such a misfortune as I had dreaded, such a terrible blow we were to be spared. I got up again, gazed out over the dark water, and longed for the dawn. Something better than dawn was destined to meet my eyes : between us and a spar that still glowed, two dark objects stood suddenly—a boat and black figures and moving oars, another behind her.

I shall never forget with what a thrill of joy I heard our people cheer. In ten minutes we could hear the stroke of their oars, and directly after Tom was on deck and his crew with him.

"God bless you !" said my uncle to Tom ; "anybody saved ?"

"One," said Tom, "only one, sir."

My joy was so great that I stood motionless outside the little crowd of the boats' crews and the ship's company till two of them approaching, bearing something heavy between them, brushed past me and laid their burden almost at my feet.

It was covered with a cloak, and was just where a lantern shed light on it. I was stooping to withdraw the cloak and see whether I could do anything for the poor sufferer beneath, when Tom put his arm through mine and drew me back gently, but with so much determination that I was obliged to yield, and he led me down to my cabin.

I felt shocked and almost indignant to think that he should suppose I had not nerve to look on a fellow-creature in distress ; but when I asked if the man was dying, he said : "No, but very drunk ; do not waste your sympathy on him. Come, do something for me. I am thirsty and nearly choked with smoke. Is there any water here ?"

I gave him some, and my uncle presently coming down, I followed them into the chief cabin and listened to an earnest discussion between them as to what ought to be done.

Tom said the vessel had evidently been deserted some time, that her cargo was cotton, which accounted for the enormous conflagration, and he urged that the yacht should be taken into the nearest port to ascertain whether this drunken fellow's tale was true.

He had, when first picked up, been able to talk, and I gathered from Tom's account that he had crawled out on the bowsprit, and there had lain for some hours. "As we cautiously approached the ship," Tom said, "we heard some one shouting, and came as near as we dared. This man was lying out on the bowsprit, and we called out to him to lower himself down to the water, when we would pick him up.

"It was a touch-and-go business for us, but I never saw a fellow perform such a feat as he did—it was like the trick of a tight-rope dancer. He knew we should have to cross right under her bows, and

he took a rope in his hand and sprung with it at one leap to the water, let go, and struck out for us. He scarcely delayed us three seconds, but I was truly glad when we got clear away from the ship's course, for though the mast went astern directly, it fell first over the very spot where we had crossed."

"Yet you say he was drunk."

"Yes; and when we picked him up he had a half-emptied rum-bottle in his bosom."

After this, seeing something in the ship's wake, but a good way off that looked like a raft, they had gone in search of it, but found nothing alive on it, nor on any of the several spars and planks that they had examined.

The man when first picked up had been sobered by the shock, and had told them that the fire had been discovered about sunrise, steam and smoke issuing from the cotton in the hold. That at first the captain had hoped to get it under, but about eight o'clock he had had the hatches battened down, and had ordered them to hoist out all the boats and stock them in case of need. This proved in course of time to be quite a false account, and even then Tom was not satisfied with it.

What followed, and why he did not go off in one of the boats, this man could not or would not tell; but that the boats were safely lowered, and that all the crew, the passengers, and the captain put off in them he affirmed several times. This account robbed the recollection of the burning ship of half its horrors, and when my uncle and Tom withdrew, feeling very weary, I went to my berth, and in spite of the past excitement slept till high day.

Mrs. Brand woke me at last with her usual dismal face. She gave me some tea and asked if I would rise.

The water was fizzing past us at a very unusual rate. I asked if we had reached Valencia. She said we had, and were leaving it again, Master having landed, and been an hour on shore. There is a coast-guard station, it seems, at Valencia, and there he found that the drunken man's tale was partly true, for one of the boats—the jolly-boat, containing the second mate and twenty-two of the ship's crew as well as several steerage passengers—had entered the harbour about an hour before we did. "And there they were," she said, "sitting with the coast-guard men, and made welcome to the best of everything—just like the Irish horsepitality."

She further said my uncle did not at all like the account these men gave of themselves, nor could he make out why they had parted company with the other boat, for this, by admission of one of them, was before the fog came on. Moreover, one of the passengers had said he doubted whether there was more than one boat; he feared that what the remaining people were on, was very little better than a raft.

"And what made him look for them here?" I asked.

"It is the nearest land," she replied; "and, besides, the wind was fair for it."

"Well," I answered, "it passes my comprehension as yet how the wind can take us in at such a rate as it must have done, and then send us out again at this spanking pace without changing!"

"We have a pilot on board now," she replied, shirking the question of the wind.

I heard distant bells, and remembered that this was Sunday morning.

"Yes, it's Sunday morning; but for all that," said Mrs. Brand, "we took a good deal of provisions on board—fowls and flour and pork, and what not—for we may fall in with these boats, and, by all I can hear, there are nearly thirty people——"

"Fall in with them?" I answered; "surely we are going out on purpose to do our utmost to find them?"

"Certainly," she replied; "trust master for that, but he was in hopes there might have been a tug or two that he might have hired to come out and cruise about for them likewise. There was nothing of the sort, however."

She often called my uncle "master," or "my master;" and I believe it was because she wished to express her opinion that he really was supreme, for she greatly disliked the young man who was called the "Captain of the Yacht," and whose business it was to take charge of her at all times when my uncle did not care to command himself, as well as when he was on shore.

"He was nothing but the master of a coasting vessel," she said, while she was brushing my hair, "and I take no 'count on him, for all he messes in his cabin by himself, as grand as you please."

"But no doubt he is a good seaman," I observed, "or my uncle would not trust him with the yacht in his own absence."

"Oh, he is well enough," she answered, "but I have no patience with his airs; not that he claims, though, to hold a candle to master or to Mr. Graham either."

So we were going out to sea to look for this boat or boats, and thus was to pass my first Sunday afloat, for I had been too ill the former Sunday to note the day.

How sweet and how remote those bells sounded. I fancied also that I smelt hay, and rose full of hope and perfectly free from sickness.

I found Tom and my uncle poring over maps and charts, calculating what was probably the present position of the boat, supposing that she had a sail and four oars, then supposing she had no sail, and lastly supposing she had only two oars.

I heard them argue on these complicated probabilities, discuss how far the vessel had sailed from the point where she was deserted by



the crew, which all the men had said was seventy miles west of Cape Clear, how long in the dead calm she had made hardly any way, then mark down exactly where she was when the wind sprung up and we found her.

These matters all discussed, a circle was drawn on one of the charts, and within its imaginary bounds I was told the boats would be sought; wind, tide, the powers of the rowers, and the known size of the boats, making it almost certain that there they must be.

I asked why these boats were probably so much behind the others; and they said that almost every man who had come in was able-bodied, and could help to row even when they could not sail, which was during the three hours' calm,—that they had confessed to not having been able to launch the long boat,—and that the two next largest boats were no better than our gigs, and would be crowded with women so as to be dangerously heavy, besides having very few to row. The weather was very much changed,—a breeze had sprung up directly after the late calm, and the wind had been rising and freshening ever since. The air was exquisitely clear, and the sea a deep blue; we were sailing at the rate of nearly eleven knots an hour; the yacht was behaving very well,—she always did, they said, in a stiff breeze,—and I thought my uncle seemed excited and hopeful; but my heart ached to think of the poor women and children who had been all night cramped up in little boats, and perhaps were drenched with spray, and faint with hunger.

It would be three hours, I was told, before we should reach the edge of our circle, accordingly after breakfast the order was given to “rig the church,” and all hands that could be spared were summoned. There is a strange solemnity in the prayers of a ship's company at sea: on board a man-of-war I am told this is especially the case; but even on board the “Curlew,” and with my uncle for chaplain, I have often felt that no church on shore could be more solemn or have a more attentive congregation.

During that first service, however, I was far too much excited to join with attention in the prayers,—my heart prayed and fainted for the boat's crew, and my ears were strained to catch the slightest sound from the look-out man; but the prayers came to an end, the reading of a short sermon followed, and we knelt down when it was over, and rose again.

Great gravity and no impatience had characterised my uncle's reading, but the instant all was over he clapped to the book, called for his glass, and while he swept the horizon with it, the “church” disappeared as if by magic, the wind kept still rising, and we spun on bowing and bending under more sail than I could have thought she would bear, when Tom came up as I was trying to look through a glass, and said,

“Dolly, if we should fall in with the boats, are you ready?”



"Ready?"

"Why, more than half the passengers are women, and who is to attend to them but Mrs. Brand and you?"

"May they come into my cabin, then?"

"May they?—they must."

"Oh, Tom, I will go and prepare for them."

"Yes, but you need not make any great commotion. I am afraid this is a wild-geese chase."

"Is it? What chance is there?"

"About as much chance as a dozen boys would have of finding a marble that one of them had dropped in a ten-acre meadow."

"I believe they would find it, and that you will find the boats."

"You need not say 'boats,'" he answered. "I am sure there is but one, and I fear it is dreadfully crowded. The passengers declare there was but one; and as to the finding of a marble, the boys no doubt would find it if they looked long enough, and when found it would be none the worse, but if we cannot find this boat in the course of a day or so, we had much better not find it at all, for it is sure to be keel upward. Still you may go and prepare,—very unlikely things do happen."

I went below and summoned Mrs. Brand.

"Why, Lord," she said, half whimpering with anxious sympathy for the sufferers, "what is the use of tearing the things out of the berths? Mr. Graham knows that if the wind keeps freshening at this rate it will blow a gale before night, and how is a boat like that to live in such a sea?"

We, however, cleared the berths, and made up beds in them. I brought out some of my clothes and put them ready, listening all the while, but in vain, for the least signal from the look-out men. So the weary anxious morning passed. Once Mrs. Brand came in and told me we had changed our course, by which I judged that we were well within the imaginary circle, and for a while I was full of hope, but hope was not the prevailing character of her mind. She always foreboded evil, and I was less restless and miserable alone when I could kneel down in my cabin and pray that our efforts might be blessed with success. All dinner-time my uncle and Tom were very grave, and afterwards they had another long discussion as to the probable position of the boat. If she had a sail, it was certain she could not have used it now for some hours, and if she was rowed, they thought she could hardly be making any way.

There was now so much motion in the yacht that though it did not make me ill, I could not walk without holding to things about me, nor venture on deck, for it poured hard with rain. Tom and my uncle were in no mood to be questioned, their anxiety was so intense. I got back to my cabin with the help of Tom's arm, and then learned from Mrs. Brand, who had come there on purpose to tell it me, that

the general belief in the yacht was that the boat would not be rescued; the boatswain thought so, and his opinion always carried weight.

"There was quite enough sea on to swamp a small boat, and one so heavily laden."

"Why could they not bail out the water?" I inquired.

She held up her hands and eyes. "Bless you, ma'am, bail out a boat full every half minute! and what are they likely to have to bail with? No, no; a boat has little chance when it blows so fresh, with drenching rain, and such a wild sea."

"It makes me tremble to hear you talk. I do not believe the boat is lost; I believe we shall find it. I pray God that we may."

"You'd better pray that it may be afore dark, then," she answered, "for nothing can save her after."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, ma'am, when the wind goes off like great guns, and every wave that strikes the yacht is like a clap of thunder, how could we hear them hail us in the dark? You don't understand,—that is why you are so hopeful."

"I think God will let us save them. There, I heard a noise on deck. What is it?"

She listened an instant. "One of those look-out men certainly sung out," she answered, "but all's quiet again."

She opened the door. Brand was coming down the companion, and with infinite disgust explained that the man at the mast-head had sung out, "Boat on the weather bow," but directly after had corrected himself,—the object was not far off, and he had recognized it as part of the wreck of the last evening.

"I cannot understand why these men all of them could not launch the long boat," I remarked. "It only took us two or three minutes last night to lower our first boat."

"But consider our crew, ma'am, and all picked men, sixteen, not counting the sailing-master; at least, I'm sure I beg the young man's pardon, the captain of the yacht. Why, I'll venture to say in that ship they were not thirty, all told. Then think of the size of the long boat! It generally takes an hour in a merchant vessel to unlash and lower a large boat. The long boat, too, is often hoisted on to the house-on-deck. When Brand and I were steward and stewardess on board the "*Dora Grant*," from Melbourne, the boats, I consider, would never have been any use if we had needed them. Why, the two that they kept alung up over the poop used to be lashed bottom upward,—they used to make roofs of them, and hang ropes of onions under one; the carpenter used to lash his spare planks and things under the other, and both of them were so dried and warped by the sun, that you might see daylight between the planks."

"Then were they spoilt?"

"No; but if the carpenter could have had two or three days' notice that they would be wanted, he would have taken a chisel and caulked them well with oakum. I used to be uneasy sometimes when I considered that he certainly never would have notice; but I made three voyages out and home in her, and we never wanted them at all, so I got used to it."

After this conversation, which made me yet more uneasy, I remained alone till dusk. Sometimes I peered through the scuttles at the grim grey sea, and sometimes tried to read. I thought both the noise and motion became less as evening advanced, but was afraid to believe it till I was called to tea, and told that the wind was moderating.

I went into the chief cabin, the charts were put away, and I saw plainly that expectation was over, so I said nothing, but, after tea, came and read the evening lessons to my uncle, for he loved reading aloud.

The wind still continued to moderate, but I was told it would be many hours before the sea would go down. Neither Tom nor my uncle went on deck. The latter seemed tired and lost in thought; but perhaps, in order to prevent my asking any questions, he still asked for more reading, and I read South's sermons till my voice failed, and all the time I was conscious that he could not listen, but was lost in cogitations about the boat. It was nearly midnight when he said, "There, child, there! you can do no more; the Lord have mercy on them. Tom, take your sister on deck,—she wants a little air before she goes to her berth."

This was a surprising idea to me; but as it was meant in kindness, I went and got a shawl and hat, and came up with Tom as well as I could; when on deck, however, I found it pleasanter than I had expected,—I could stand very comfortably in the shelter where Tom put me; the wind, though high, was not cold, the sky was full of stars, and the rain had long been over.

We stood together for a few minutes in silence. My heart was oppressed and expectation was over, when to my surprise and joy Tom said, "You see he soon gives us hope."

"He, Uncle Rollin? What, have not you given it up, then?"

"I never was sanguine. No; I do not give up the boat. I think it might live in that sea. He thought not."

"Oh, Tom, I am thankful for this respite from certainty. Tell me where we are now."

"Due west of the Skelligs, and two hours' sail from them."

"Then could we see the light on the great Skellig?"

He laughed and answered, "Why, Dolly, you are looking due west."

I had spoken, because for an instant I had seen a tiny red spark on the distant water, and had thought it might be the light-house.

We came out from our shelter, and with his arm I took a turn on deck. Again I saw it.

"Look at that little red thing," I said; "it is like a fire-fly quivering on the water."

"It is only a light," he answered; "all vessels are bound to hang out lights."

At that same instant, as we rose on a wave, the look-out man sung out. "Light ahead!" I thought he said; and a confusion of voices repeated the words from all parts of the yacht. Then the light was gone.

"What do you take it for?" cried Tom, suddenly turning on Brand, who was now standing behind us. My uncle was on deck before Brand could reply, and I heard his order to the man at the helm, "Starboard helm!" whereupon the yacht presently swung round to the left, and as I looked over the bulwarks I saw the little red light again. It was apparently bearing down upon us.

"That light hangs uncommon low, sir," said Brand, touching his sailor's hat.

Tom replied, "It may be a fishing vessel, but I hope to God it is a smaller craft."

He spoke in an excited tone, and it was evident that the sailors did not take this for an ordinary light, nor did my uncle, for in two minutes I heard orders given to shorten sail, and a great fog-horn was sounded, which I suppose was a signal to the bearers of the light, for our lights were put out. We lost sight of her then, and when she danced up again the sailors followed close on the horn, alternately cheering and shouting "Light ahoy!" But the little red eye drifted down upon us, and

"Like ships dismasted that are hailed,  
And send no answers back again,"

she vouchsafed us no reply.

There was a pause of expectation. "I never saw such a strange light before," said Mrs. Brand; "it's like a cabin lamp." They generally did the last thing I should have expected, and as I stood by Mrs. Brand almost in the dark, I said to her, "They cannot see us. If we do not hang out more lights, how are they to find us?"

"Oh, ma'am," she answered, "never fear; we are not leaving it to them to find us. We want to keep *them* in sight if we can."

Still no sign from the little red eye; then another rousing cheer burst from our company, and in a lull of the wind during the silence which followed there came up from the water something that surely was meant for a reply, a feeble wavering cheer, half joy, half wailing, but pitched high. Those were women's voices, I knew, and tears of deep delight almost choked me. In the darkness came all the confusion instantly which had woke me the previous night. We

hove to, and hauled down a sail ; but lights began to appear, and dazzled me, and men darted about, and confused me. I could see a great sail coming down, but I by no means expected it to interfere with me, and as it swung round, I, trying to get out of the way, did the very thing Brand had spoken of the night before, put my foot on the boat's fall, and slipping down, struck my temple slightly against some projecting corner. I felt sick for a moment, and found that blood was trickling down my cheek.

It was bitter to lose sight of the lamp, but there was confusion and terror for me on deck now that I was giddy and unable to stand. I accordingly staggered below. The lamp was burning in my cabin. I lifted my hair, and saw in the glass a very small cut on my temple. I began in all haste to stanch the blood and wash the traces of it from my face, that I might return ; but I could not ascend in time to see the approach of the boat, and before I had quite recovered from the giddiness I heard such stamping, shouting, and cheering, that I knew the boat must have come alongside, and that her occupants, whoever they might be, were on board. The yacht appeared to plunge her bows in the water, and shake herself strangely. I could hardly stand, and was cold, and shivered, partly from the hurt, partly from excessive excitement ; but it is certainly true that some sights are good "for sair e'en." I saw one which cured the blow on the temple, for I never felt it after.

I heard, and saw when I looked up a strangely eager and motley crowd,—two or three men, and a good many limping women wet and staring. Then followed another man who came stumbling down with great difficulty ; two little children preceded him, and he had a bundle strapped on his back. I touched him on the arm and said, "Come in here," and he turned into my cabin with the children.

The man could not speak. One arm seemed to be a good deal burned, and his bare feet and hands were blistered and raw from rowing and exposure.

He sunk down on the floor, his hands hanging at his sides, and he appeared to be even more exhausted than the children, who lay down beside him, their clothes all drenched with spray and their hair matted with wind and rain.

The first thing I thought of was to feed these poor creatures. A glorious supper had been cooked in readiness hours ago, and Brand and his wife were flying about in the chief cabin, bringing in hot soup, and meat, and wine, and all the good things required for starving people.

I took the children for passengers, and the man for their servant ; otherwise I knew he would not have come to the after part of the vessel, for he seemed to be a seaman, and seamen go by instinct to the other end.

Brand and his wife had, however, received orders to bring the

passengers and the women into the chief cabin for the present ; and when I slipped in to see what I could get, these poor creatures were making more noise and confusion than forty sailors would have excited, and some were in a half-fainting state, and one in hysterics. I seized the first thing that came to hand, which was some macaroni soup, that Brand was just bringing in. I ladled it out of the tureen into a basin, and crumbled bread upon it. The force of the wind appeared to be a good deal spent, for I could now walk tolerably and carry my soup with me. I was very glad to escape from the noise and turmoil ; and when I got to my own cabin I knelt on the floor and put a little soup into the children's mouths, feeding them by turns. They soon ceased to cry and moan, and ate eagerly, but the man took no notice, though I spoke to him. He seemed hardly conscious ; and when I found that he could not rise and get supper for himself, I went back again, got a glass of red wine and a roll, and put my hand on his forehead, and the glass to his mouth. At first this was all to no purpose, but shortly he smelt the wine, opened his bleared eyes, and seemed to revive a little. I got him to drink some, and breaking off bits of bread, put them into his mouth, after which he seemed to sink back again into a kind of torpor.

The poor little children appeared to be about three or four years old. They had no sooner done eating than they began to fret and wail again, and no wonder, for their pretty limbs were sore with salt water, and their weakness was pitiable.

I ran to Brand, and made him bring me a large jug of warm water. In the meantime the man had roused himself sufficiently to loosen the bundle from his back, and when I turned from the poor little creatures whom I had washed as well as their weakness would permit, I saw that he had laid it across his knees. I could not attend to him, the children absorbed all my care,—they were so weary and querulous that it was not without great difficulty I cut away their drenched clothes, clothed them from my store, and put them into the berths ; but this once done, they were soon quiet, and sobbed themselves to sleep. Then before I could succeed in rousing my sailor, Mrs. Brand brought in two women who looked the picture of misery and fatigue. One was so faint that we had great difficulty in getting her into her berth, the other was not so weak. I left Mrs. Brand to do what she could for her, and returned to the man.

That bundle which lay across his knees—I little thought, when moving past him I had touched it with my dress, what it was. I approached death for the first time. It was an infant.

I saw the light of the lamp upon a white calm face, and two little plump hands. I could not doubt for an instant that it was dead ; and when I came and knelt by the man as he sat on the floor, I touched the fair little arm and found it cold.

As he sat in the corner, propped up by the settees, his head hung

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forward and two or three tears had dropped down his rough cheeks on the waxen face of the babe. I asked the poor fellow if I might take it away, and he looked at me with stupid bloodshot eyes, but did not answer, so I took it from him, carrying it to my own berth, cut off the little frock which was soiled and wet, wrapped it in a small white shawl, and laid my white veil over its quiet face.

Though it has taken a long time to describe all this, I do not think it was half-an-hour in the doing.

The next thing was to go to the chief cabin and see what could be done for this man. I wanted to find some one to attend him and take him away, but was very glad to retire, for the noise and excitement of the rescued people was distressing to witness,—some of the women were asleep with heads on the table, and some seemed almost beside themselves.

My uncle sat very gravely, but with rather a puzzled air, at the head of the table ; the American captain was at his right hand, and looked as composed as if no such things as shipwrecks had ever been brought under his notice ; opposite to him were the two passengers, one of whom when I entered was proposing my uncle's health, and when the other rose to second it he staggered back, and subsided quietly on to the floor, contriving to make his speech in this new position, and wave his hands with great politeness and elegance.

"The poor souls," observed Mrs. Brand, speaking of the women, "ought not to have been allowed to eat and drink as they pleased. It's no use master telling me, to speak to them,—they are quite past listening."

I retreated hastily. They had quite enough on their hands without helping me, so I resolved to do what I could for my sailor by myself, and on returning found that he had managed to raise himself, and was kneeling, with his elbows on the settee. I thought he was muttering a prayer ; and though sailors are not irreligious folks, I did not see this without surprise. I waited till he should have finished ; but fatigue overcame him, his head dropped, and he dozed, so I touched him and asked if I should wash his arm, for it seemed to have been burnt. I had warm water ; but when I set it beside him he said in a hoarse whisper, "I can get up if you like," and accordingly he rose with difficulty, and sat by the table under the lamp.

Never in my life had I touched anything so utterly begrimed. Some of his matted hair and whiskers had been singed off : he must have put his head into the thickest of the smoke, for the rain had washed enough black out of it over his face to give him the complexion of a Mulatto. His old burnt jacket was stiff with wet, and stuck to the injured arm ; but nothing could be done till it was removed, so I took a sharp pair of scissors and cut it up the sleeve and shoulder as gently as I could.



The pain this gave him roused him effectually, and he writhed in his seat, but did not utter any exclamation. I had only olive-oil and cotton wool to dress the burn with ; but they would be of no use I knew while the salt water was in it, so with the courage of desperation I proceeded to bathe it, trembling from head to foot with fear, as my patient did with pain.

No one to help, no use calling anybody, so on I went till the poor fellow's arm was bandaged, and his blistered hand tied up in one of my finest pocket-handkerchiefs.

The left hand also was a good deal swelled and blistered, so I washed it also and tied it up, which done, in a hoarse whisper, he begged me to wash his face.

Accordingly I went to my can for fresh cold water, turned a towel over my hand, held back his thick hair from his forehead, and washed and dried his face deliberately and comfortably ; but it did not look much the better for this attention,—the shock head of curly hair was half singed off, the whiskers were burnt, the lips cracked, and altogether he was an ugly specimen of a seaman, and his head being still wet from the rain, little ink-like streams were trickling down his neck. I dried his hair, and made three towels quite black in the process. He certainly was an uncommonly dirty fellow, and looked as if he had never been clean ; but then he was my own particular patient, so I shut my eyes to that, and was proud of him. Besides, the courage he had displayed while I was torturing his arm made me admire him.

I now told him to sit quietly while I went to inquire for a berth for him. Brand, whom I consulted, said that my uncle and the captain of the burnt ship were on deck. They had given up the chief cabin to the women ; the captain would have Mr. Graham's sleeping-cabin ; and he did not know without inquiring where the man was to be lodged.

He was just starting on his errand when I remembered that my poor sailor had had no supper excepting the morsels I had put into his mouth at first, so I told Brand to bring me something good for him, and he soon returned and followed me down with a glorious basin of soup, a plate of roast beef, and some salad, and a stiff glass of spirits and water. When I entered, however, I found Tom and Mrs. Brand both looking a good deal frightened.

"Where is my man ?" I exclaimed.

"You should not have left him," said Tom ; "when I came in he was almost fainting, lying on the floor. I thought he had better be with the children than anywhere else ; in fact, he cannot be moved, so as soon as he came to a little, Mrs. Brand and I helped him to turn into this empty berth."

"I thought he was dying, I declare," said Mrs. Brand, who always thought something dreadful.



I went up to the berth where the man, who looked as if he had boxing-gloves on, was lying half insensible. I was sure he wanted food. I could not bear that these delectable viands should be wasted, so, I resolved to shake him if nothing else would do, and make him eat, if I possibly could. I gave the meat to Tom to hold, and the tumbler to Mrs. Brand, for the yacht pitched a little, then I brought the soup close to him and told him his supper was come.

The smell of food is sweet to the starving. My sailor presently came out of his stupor, raised himself on his elbow, looked into the soup bowl, and his whole countenance lighted up. I began to feed him, and he ate every mouthful; we then cut up the meat and brought him his grog. His great hungry eyes followed us, and with a murmur of satisfaction he opened his mouth for my fork, and went on calmly and deliberately eating and drinking till all was consumed.

Just as he had finished, laid himself down and begun to snore, one of the children reared up its head and cried out, "Oh, please I want some tea, and I want some corn-cakes and some plums and pudding."

"Why, you stingy thing," said Tom to me, "you have not given them half enough to eat. You should have seen the people eat in the chief cabin."

I took the little creature up, wrapped her in a shawl, and when I said she should have some more supper she laughed for joy.

We drew the curtains to shut out my sailor, that he might sleep in peace, and we might enjoy ourselves at our ease. My sickness was now so entirely gone that, though the vessel heaved and pitched a good deal, I felt quite well and so hungry, that when Mrs. Brand appeared, with a world of good things, I sat down to make a late supper with Tom in my own cabin, he and I each holding a child, for both were now awake. Mrs. Brand, standing by, pinned the joint of beef with a fork, that it might not bounce off the table, and held the salad bowl in her hand for the same reason.

I had drawn the curtain across my own berth, in which the dead infant lay, and I did not mean to mention its presence to any one, least of all to Mrs. Brand. Yet though we had such cause for joy in the saving of many lives, I felt as if guilty of great heartlessness in eating and enjoying myself, while the little body lay so near to me.

But the occasion was peculiar; Tom was in a genial humour, like his old self, easy and affectionate; the children were in ecstasies over their supper; and Mrs. Brand in high spirits, as was usual when her hands were full, so I ate, and delighted in Tom's talk, and felt the pleasure of success after anxiety.

## CHAPTER X.

"The wills above be done, but I would fain die a dry death."—*Tempest*.

THAT was a night of considerable fatigue, for as fast as one child fell asleep the other woke and cried, and there were two women who were ill, and I had to go to them. Poor creatures, they did not complain of past suffering, but they evidently had suffered sorely.

My sailor was so quiet that once in passing I opened the curtains of his berth and looked at him;—sound asleep, eyes shut, mouth open, the pillow black from contact with his hair, and the sheets in the same condition wherever his torn and scorched shirt had come into contact with them.

At last, when all was quiet, and Mrs. Brand was dozing on the settee, Tom came in and asked if I could do anything for the American passenger; he had been very much hurt, but had not complained.

We made him welcome, and I recognised him as the man who had proposed Uncle Rollin's health. He hobbled in with groans of pain. "His feet had been burnt," he said, "by the dreadful heat of the lower deck when he went below with the captain to investigate the cause of the fire."

He had taken off his shoes shortly after, on account of the unbearable heat they retained, and at first the burns had seemed mere trifles, but salt water had got into them and he was suffering agony.

"I have not been able to do as much as I could have wished," he said, "for I am coming over to Europe for my health, so I tried to give as little trouble as possible, for you may suppose we have had a hard time of it."

He had a loud hollow cough. I woke Mrs. Brand, and we did what we could for him, but did not relieve him much.

He had been a passenger on board the burnt ship, and as he sat, propped up with pillows in a corner, he gave us an account of their numbers, by which I found that we had rescued thirty persons, only six of whom, beside the captain, were seamen.

"A queer lot we were," he observed; "those women that you saw in the chief cabin belonged to a trapeze company—'a show,' we call it in the States, and some of them were dancers, some conjurors, and some actors, fairies in a sort of pantomime, which, as far as I can make out, their show partly consisted in. Sallow, stunted young things they were. The superior members of the troupe had gone up to New York, and come home in a steamer: these were following in a merchant ship, and very decently they behaved themselves," he continued; "that old Irishwoman snoring yonder acted mother to

them. She swore at them now and then, but to do her justice she kept them out of harm's way."

"None of the women in the cabin looked young," I said, surprised at this account of their calling.

"No, they wither early, I should judge. But some are not young; one is the mother of three strapping girls that are here with her, they dance, and she is a fairy."

As he spoke like an American, I thought he was one, till he told me that he was of English birth. "Though I have lived in the States twenty years," he observed, "and belong to them now both heart and tongue."

In spite of his past fatigues he could neither rest nor be silent, but by little and little, as the night wore away and daylight came in from above, he told us the story of their misfortunes.

"The ship was laden with cotton, and about eight o'clock on Friday evening steam was perceived to be rising from the hatches over the main hold; every minute or two a whiff of light smoke came after it, and fears were entertained that it might be caused by fire-damp.

"There was some secrecy at first, but the men were sent below to the pumps, I know, and there was some notion of cutting holes over where the cargo was stowed so as to pour down water on it, while letting in as little air as possible; but it seems that if cotton is well flooded, it is liable to swell so as to burst the deck open, and I made out that this plan was given up.

"But in less than an hour," he continued, "things looked so much worse that the captain ordered all hands on deck, and summoned the passengers; he told them that a portion of the cargo certainly had ignited, but that as we were only seventy miles from Cape Clear, he hoped we might make it, and also get the fire under.

"The steerage passengers were at their supper when they were sent for. I heard them as they came up saying what a mighty hot night it was—what an uncommonly hot night; he told it all out in two minutes, and began to give his orders to his men instantly. It was a very sudden blow, and not one of those people, man or woman, said a single word.

"Nobody took any further notice of them," he continued: "all hands were set to work to extinguish the fire. Did you ever see a fire?"

"No, never."

"I never saw one the least like this. A little steam would come puffing out over a spot in the deck not larger than the crown of a man's hat, and then blue flame would hover in it, but not touch the deck. They would put it out directly, and it would appear in another place; wherever it had fed, the place was rotten.

"The crew consisted of thirty, all told. The passengers were twenty, not including these children.

"Excepting myself, Mr. Brandon, Mr. Crayshaw, and the children, they were all steerage passengers. We stood at first a good deal huddled together, but as soon as I had passed to the front I saw that the main hatchway had been lifted, that the bales might be raised by a crane; but the heat and steam seemed to drive the men back, and the bales were so rotten that they would not hold together on the crane hook, but kept falling back with a dull thud; and when this had happened several times, the captain ordered the hatches to be battened down, and all sail to be crowded.

"It was now dark, and, though the heat increased, I did not see that the fire gained on us at all; they kept flooding the deck with water, and throwing it up into the rigging. I was full of hope that it would be kept under, and therefore it was a horrid blow to me when the captain had the lower sails hauled up, and gave orders for unlash-ing and launching the long boat and the jolly boat. I do not believe this was a quarter of an hour from the time he had battened down the hatches. Well, the jolly boat was stowed inside the long boat; they succeeded in getting her unlash-ed; we hove to, and she was launched. Brandon and Crayshaw had volunteered to go below and help the men to fetch up biscuit, flour, water, cocoa, and any other provisions they could lay their hands on. I saw them come on deck again all right, and one boat was ready; but when they tried to get the long boat unlash-ed flames broke out, and before these could be got under she was so damaged that they dared not use her. Those two boats would have held us all.

"An hour at least was spent over those boats. I had volunteered to do what I could, and the captain ordered me to take all the women below, that they might put on their warmest shawls and fetch up their money and what valuables they had. I was to make them keep together, and be ready to bring them up at a signal from him.

"My legs trembled under me as I marshalled them, for I was shocked to hear that he did not think there was any use wasting time over the small boats, and meant to give all his mind to the making of a raft.

"It all seemed so sudden! As I went after the women I shouted to Crayshaw, 'What on earth does it all mean?' He was just flinging off his velvet coat and answered, 'Depend upon it he knows what he is about.' I felt as I suppose a man may, when not thinking he is at all near death, he is told by the surgeons that he has only an hour to live. They were already flinging overboard every spar and plank and spare yard they could lay their hands on to construct a raft as fast as ever they could.

"Never shall I forget how the women tore out and tossed over their things, nor how their tongues went. I helped them to make up their bundles as well as I could, but nobody knew what to save. We did not know what to be at, and before we were called they

would go up again, carrying arm-loads of rubbish, old shawls, old baskets, handboxes, bundles, and even old shoes.

"I had heard the constant splash and shouting as the materials went over the side, and as I looked over, what would I not have given to be young? A dozen men were working with a will. There was that dandy Crayshaw lashing away, and Brandon as nimble as a cat following out all his directions; for the captain knew that Crayshaw had experience, and had given him the command. They were making it on the lee side, of course, but still it pitched about more than was agreeable. It was a strange sight, but, dear me, what should a young lady know about the making of a raft!"

"How large was it?" I asked.

"How large? well, about five-and-thirty feet long, and rather narrow in proportion. I am amazed when I think how the time appeared to spin on, for it was now eleven o'clock, and I was still standing among the rubbish and luggage of different sorts when Brandon came up to the captain and reported the raft ready. Crayshaw followed in a moment, and the captain said, 'Gentlemen, there is no time to be lost.' 'We are under your orders, captain,' said Brandon. A great burst of smoke came between us, and I did not hear the answer, but I saw that a good many of the women had disappeared; they had gone down again, hoping to save something more, poor souls, and I ran after Brandon, and between us we argued and pushed them up, stumbling as they came with quantities of bedding and boxes, not a particle of which ever was lowered. The change was amazing by this time; the whole place was gleaming with little spurts of flame, but there was a great noise and confusion, screaming of women, and cries of shame. 'What's up now?' we shouted to Crayshaw, who was kicking the bundles aside as they fell, and pulling the women on. The passengers, he told us, and some of the crew had made a rush for the jolly boat. It was manned by the most able-bodied of the crew; it had dropped astern and disappeared.

"When, hours after that we counted out the people left behind, twenty-three were missing; they had stolen away from the ill-fated ship, and no doubt their excuse to themselves was that if they had taken in any more they must have been swamped.

"The captain, however, was quite equal to the occasion, and after swearing at the boat, to relieve his mind, he vowed he didn't see what there was to make such work about. 'And, Mr. Crayshaw,' said he, 'that is your opinion.' Crayshaw was an American, the only one of the passengers that was American born. He took the captain's meaning instantly, and between them I believe they actually made the women think the raft was safer than the boat.

"Very nasty work it was getting them lowered, and, before this was half done, one of them cried out, 'Merciful heaven, I forgot the baby!' She had been very good to the orphan children, but the

second time she went down she had laid this one in a berth, and only just found out that no one had brought it up. She was like a mad creature, and down she flew, Brandon after her. They found the child asleep—a wonderful thing that was, surely. He wrapped a blanket about its head to keep the smoke off, and tried to get on deck following her, but they were met by such a volume of smoke and steam that she fell down choked, and he got hold of her by the arm and hauled her up by main force; he fell twice, but when he was down he could breathe, and he crawled on deck dragging her after him. They were not five minutes below, but when he got her on deck he was badly burnt, and she was stone dead.

"He never knew that. I took the child, and he staggered on between two till he got his breath, and soon none of us doubted that our best chance was to embark on the raft; for the beams were creaking and splitting, and the flames curling round the mainmast, and with a loud singing noise the pitch seemed to boil. The fire did not appear as yet to have possession of a large space, but it was all about the mainmast, and that made us long to give it a wide berth.

"We were all lowered without accident, and it was a strange thing to see her go sailing on when we had cast off and were drifting astern.

"The captain had a pocket compass, the Lord be praised for that; and for my fellow-passengers, never were there such ridiculous fellows, I do believe."

"Ridiculous!" I exclaimed, with astonishment.

"Well," he replied, as if apologising for them; "there was hardly any motion on the raft at first, but one woman had brought a pillow-case half full of oranges and apples with her; some of them got loose, and Brandon and Crayshaw had to lie down on their stomachs to catch them, for fear they should lose any and roll off. Crayshaw, as he did it, actually whistled and sung. Another woman had brought a rope of onions that she snatched from under one of the boats on the poop (good luck to her for it). Brandon tied it together with the string it had hung by, and put it round his neck as the easiest way of carrying it. As he stooped it flew over his head, and he called to Crayshaw, 'Look out, America, my necklace is coming.'

"I felt confounded at their behaviour. I said to the captain, 'Well, this is a most amazing way of committing ourselves to the sea. Anybody, to see them go on, might think we'd met with some great deliverance.'

"'Well, Mr. Dickson, sir,' replies the captain, 'I reckon they perhaps think so;' and he looked on uncommonly satisfied. As the last orange went in, and the pillow-case was tied up, they began to overhaul the onions, and Brandon insisted on filling Crayshaw's pockets with them; they seemed indeed so light-hearted and so

excited that at last I could bear it no longer, and I burst out, 'What in nature all this means, I suppose they know themselves, for I don't.'

"Means," replied the captain, turning his head over his shoulder and staring at me; "why, aren't you aware that every minute of the last hour she has been just as likely to blow up as not,—ay! and a great deal likelier!"

"He confirmed his opinion with various strong expressions that I need not repeat to a lady.

"But the notion of the blowing up stopped my remarks for some time. I had thought all along that they had both seemed in a frantic state of eagerness to get that raft ready; and when Brandon had been helped down, for he was terribly bruised, I saw them take each other by the hand. Bruised they both were, but neither of them seemed to feel their hurts at first.

"Fire-damp's an eternal risky article," continued the captain. 'Mr. Brandon, sir, I'd be much obliged to you for an apple; I'm almost choked.' Brandon turned as he lay and gave him one. The captain took out his pocket-knife and peeled it in quite as particular a way as ever he would have done in his own ship. Then he jerked the peel overboard, and while he was eating he and his chief mate watched it.

"We shall do now," said he; "we're making no way at all, and she's forging on pretty fast ahead."

"In fact, it had fallen very calm, and I calculate we had been on the raft half-an-hour, when he gave orders to his men to see about getting up the sail that we had brought with us. It took some time to fix that, as you may suppose; but the ship, though she was sailing wildly, was well out of our way by that time, and during the whole remainder of that first night nobody seemed to feel either fear, fatigue, or hunger. The excitement had been great, and there was a good deal to do. The boxes, bags, and what-not that the women sat on, had all to be fastened together, and, by means of a cabin lamp that we had brought with us, we did this pretty well. Then the raft had constantly to be lashed afresh in one place or another, and as soon as it was light the captain had a great sea anchor made in case the wind should freshen.

"It was not till high day that we all knew where our real weak point was—we had hardly anything to eat; almost all the women as they passed the boats where they were stored had filled their pockets with onions, and, as I said, we had a pillow-case half full of oranges and apples; besides that we had plenty of water, but only a very small keg of flour, and it was not half full. Of course, the children would not touch the raw onions, nor could we; but we each had an apple, and we turned the onions over to the seamen and the women. Then we kneaded up a little flour in water for each person.



It made a kind of paste, and we coaxed the children to eat it, putting bits of orange into it ; but we began to feel the pangs of hunger by that time, and Brandon and Crayshaw were very stiff and sore. It fell calmer and calmer till the raft hardly swayed on the sea, and the fine warm air comforted us after the chill of the night. Brandon and Crayshaw, who had been amusing the children since daylight, whistling and singing to them, telling them queer stories, setting up little whirligigs for them, which they pulled with strings, settling the women's shawls and serving out the rations, had now begun to be very quiet ; they were nearly used up, I calculate.

"But about ten o'clock the women began to show themselves weary and out of spirits ; first one shed a few tears, and then another. Then Brandon asked if any of them had got a bible or a prayer-book, and one of them produced a dirty little prayer-book. So he proposed to the captain to have morning service, and they were all pleased, poor souls ; it seemed not only something to occupy them, but the right sort of thing. So he read over the English morning service, and then some collects and hymns. He sang several hymns for them, to please them, and they joined as well as they could. Then after that, it being almost a dead calm, he and Crayshaw laid themselves down in the sun ; and if you'll believe me, they both fell sound asleep, and slept as soundly as they could have done in their berths, and I think as sweetly.

"That was something for us all to look at, and for some of us to wonder over.

"The captain had his compass in his hand, and the great sail shifted and flapped. Another onion was served out all round, and the children had their paste again ; they would have cried if they had been hungry, and none of us could have borne that, it lowered our courage so.

"The baby had been a great pleasure and occupation to the poor women and girls. He was ten months old, and I actually fancied that when he woke in the morning, after sleeping all night, he looked about him as if he had the wit to be surprised. He spluttered a good deal over his paste, but they made him eat it, and he crowed at the sails and the sparkles on the water and his little sisters almost all the morning. He was asleep now, and all was very still ; but at last the captain, not without unwillingness, gave the order to haul down our sail. There was hardly a waft of air, he said ; but what came being now off shore, down it must come.

"Oh ! you cannot think how much worse for us that quiet was than all the noise and fright and hurry that had gone before.

"With the noise of hauling down the sail, Brandon and Crayshaw woke, shivered a little, sat up, and glanced at one another. It always hurt me to see them do that," he added, and paused.

"Indeed, why should it have done ?" I inquired.

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"Well—yes, ma'am, thank you, I'll take some tea" (this was to Mrs. Brand, who came in and offered him a cup); "because it made me feel that they knew theirs were the most valuable lives on the raft—we were oldish, and they were in their prime. O these feet of mine! I know I shall never stand on them again."

"Oh, yes, indeed you will. We shall get into Valencia shortly, and you will have a surgeon; but tell me about the raft,—that seems to make you forget the pain."

"Why, as I said, those two woke and looked about them, and all seemed changed to them and to us; they were cold and hungry, and dirty, and wet; all the excitement was over, and they were both so stiff now that they could hardly drag themselves upright. I could see, too, that they were sorely vexed to find that the sail was lowered."

"Brandon twisted himself round, that the women might not see his face; Crayshaw made an inspection of the raft, and saw that she lay as still as a tub on a pond—made an inspection of the water, but not the remotest flutter of a sail could be seen anywhere. He looked for a moment dumbfounded, then he drew a diamond ring that he wore from his finger, and with a sort of rage of impatience chucked it into the sea."

"Nobody but the captain and I saw the action, unless Brandon did. I saw the little sparkle flash and go down. Then he looked up, and catching the captain's eye he said, for an excuse, 'It cut my hand last night; I suppose I have a right to fling it away, if I choose.'

"'Well,' answered the captain, 'my opinion is contrary to that.'

"'I should like to fling myself after it, I know,' Crayshaw went on, in a bitter tone, poor fellow, but speaking low."

"'Well,' replied the captain; 'and for aught you know, sir, so should I, but my conscience is clean contrary to that sort of thing. It wouldn't square with what I have to do.'

"'I have nothing to do,' said Crayshaw."

"The captain put his hand in his coat pocket and pulled out a parcel. 'Mr. Dickson,' said he, 'if these two gentlemen air agreeable, will you serve out an onion to each of 'em, for they've not had their rations. And, gentlemen,' said he, looking straight at Crayshaw, 'you air always in such spirits as I've never found opportunity hitherto to put in a word; but now, if you air agreeable, I propose a smoke;' with that he opened the parcel, and there were enough cigars in it for every man to have one, and there was one over. The sailors would rather by half have had a pipe, but oh! how glad we all were of those whiffs of comfort,—they seemed to put heart into us, and after that Crayshaw said he thought the onions smelt rather relishing, and ate his; Brandon had got one down already without the least ado. Now it seems odd to you, I dare say, when we were at that pass—no signs of rescue, and hardly any—

thing to eat—that we should have cared about the eating of an onion.”

“Yes,” I said, “I should have expected that you would all have been more frightened—more serious.”

“Ah! well, that stage came next; it had fallen perfectly calm, and now a fog came up and wrapped itself over us, so as we could hardly see from one end of the raft to the other. As long as the captain’s steady face could be seen the girls could keep quiet, but when it grew dim in the mist they got afraid; first one began to fret, and then another. Crayshaw was himself again, and he scolded and joked and encouraged as well as he could, but all to no purpose; ‘we weren’t making a mite of way, they knew; they should all go down to the bottom or be starved; they hadn’t been half such good girls as they could ha’ wished to be if they had but know’d how it would end,’ and with that they began to talk about their sins, and next about their souls! Crayshaw turned himself round then, for he knew he was done for. And Brandon said, if we would light the lamp he would have another service. They were all in a terrible fuss by that time, sobbing and wringing their hands, but he managed to get the command; and when they cried out that he must pray for them as he did by the poor lady that died on board, he said, quite cheerfully, yes, he would,—there could not be a better time. Well, I know the captain was as frightened as could be; their crying and their talk made him groan and wipe his forehead as the burning ship never did. ‘Good God, Mr. Brandon,’ said he, ‘if anything can be done, you air the man to do it; won’t you act parson and tell ‘em they’re all right!’

“I was nearly used up by that time and lay still, but I got aware by degrees that Brandon was half reading half discoursing to them, talking about the love of God to man, if you’ll believe me. My word! he almost made out it was well for them that they were sinners, because it was for such, said he, that the Son of God had died.”

“Don’t you think he was right?” I said, observing that he paused and seemed to reflect. “The women and girls were dreadfully frightened because they suddenly felt that they were sinners; how natural, then, and how right to show that for sinners Christ had died.”

“Well, I suppose it must have been right, for it answered; but I thought it strange when they all felt how hard it was to go down—that he should talk about the love of God. But,” he continued, “though I haven’t got religion myself, I agree that he behaved himself grandly. If he was a parson and preached anywhere, I’d go twenty miles to hear him, not only for what he said, but because he had a voice that’s almost enough to charm up the dead.

“He never said a word about death, either drowning or starvation. If Christ was here now, he asked them, standing on the raft, and they could see Him, should they be afraid to ask Him to forgive them and help them over their last trouble and take them home? Some

of them said, 'No.' 'Well then, ask Him,' says he; 'for He is here standing on the raft. I feel that He is, though I cannot see Him.'

"And so then he began to pray. That sort of religion is not what I've been used to, but it seemed to warm my blood and make death bearable. He made out, you see, that Christ was the love of God waiting with us, till we were ready for Him. Well, I shouldn't wonder if I've heard that said before; but sitting still on the raft on the still water, and the still mist lying as thick over us as a shroud, lowered down ready because there'd be none to do it for us after death, it sounded different, and I calculate you'll not be sorry to hear that before I went off into a faint, as I did from hunger and a sore fit of coughing, I made up a prayer myself and felt easier for it."

"You must have suffered more than any of them, you are such an invalid."

"I don't know about that. I had neither burns on me nor bruises, and I was not fatigued; I had only to lie still; and through all the faint or the sleep (part both, I guess) I heard him talking to them with a sweet man's voice, always quite cheerful, and then I heard him sing for them, and then I grew quite insensible.

"I believe it was pain that woke me at last, more than motion and noise. I sat up; there was a swaying and a surging of water, and the sea anchor was just about to be launched overboard.

"What is that like, do you say? Well, it's something like a sort of a huge kite, weighted at one end so as to keep it up and down in the water; we were fastened to it by a rope about twenty fathoms long. The object of it was to keep the raft end on to the sea."

"Was that about midnight?" I inquired.

"I think so; the full moon was just going down, and the sea had risen when I sat up."

"Then you had the sail again, I suppose?"

"Not so: a raft can only sail before the wind; and now the wind that had come up, suddenly pushing the mist before it, was from the south-east."

"Then I am afraid you were in worse case than ever?" I observed.

"No, not altogether, for at least we had something to do; we had to hold on and take care of the children. It is astonishing to me, considering all we went through, that the time seems so short. There was no reading, no praying, and no singing now, you may be sure. The baby cried and wailed all night, but the other children were tolerably quiet. We had hardly anything left by that time to give them, and they were perished with cold, and wet with the salt water. By eleven o'clock the women all tied themselves together, and, as well as we could hear ourselves speak, we shouted to them and to one another to keep up heart, for if we did not soon fall in with a sail we should be swamped, and then, we said, the Lord would have mercy on our souls. Oh, that was a dreadful day! but yet if it had to come

over again I would rather go through with it than with the calm. I cannot speak of it any more, and these feet of mine shoot fire. The whole day long we were knocked about by the wind and drenched with rain and salt spray; sometimes the waves that struck us loosened a spar or plank and it was flung among us, striking us and loosening our hold. It was when one of those seas struck us that the baby got a blow; Brandon had it on his arm at the time, the poor women being all so spent with fatigue that they could not hold it. But I don't remember much more, except that they lashed me to Crayshaw that he might hold me up—in short we were all knotted and held together round the spar that we set up for a mast, and how we got over the day I cannot say that I know. Yet, though I seemed to others to be insensible, I revived the instant I heard the captain call out that he saw a light. The carpenter roared out, 'A sail, a sail, right ahead,' and a minute after we heard a rousing cheer."

"And that lamp?" I inquired; "it was a cabin lamp, was it not?"

"Yes," he answered; "the captain allowed it on account of the infant. I noticed it and brought it up, for I thought it would be a comfort, as it proved."

"Did you bring it on board?"

"I can't say; your people may have done so, they did everything for us."

"I hope it is not lost: I should like to have it."

"Would you, though? Well, you are a very nice girl, miss, I will say—not a bit of pride, uncommonly like an American!"

*(To be continued.)*